REVEALED! MEET THE NEW SERIES' CELEBRITIES

SCOTTISH MARRIAGES FIND CIVIL RECORDS

BRITAIN'S BESTSELLING FAMILY HISTORY MAGAZINE

ISSUE 220 AUGUST 2024

WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?®

THE BEST FREE FAMILY HISTORY WEBSITES

We reveal the online gems that will help you grow your family tree without costing a penny

48 HOURS IN DUBLIN

Make the most of a genealogy trip to Ireland's capital city

My great grandmother's love for her WW1 husband never died

ANCESTRY PRO TOOLS

Is the new upgrade worth having?

PIRATES AND PRIVATEERS

Explore the records

SPORTING ANCESTORS

Discover athletes in your family online

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

- Find family in South Yorkshire
- The history of the modern Olympics
- A collection of child migrant letters

DISCOVER THE WHOLE PICTURE

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Do you have a fascinating family story to share?

We'd love to hear about your discoveries, email us at *yourstory@ancestry.co.uk*

Welcome

Sarah's Top Tip

You can use online maps to get closer to the lives of your ancestors

Alan Crosby's answer to Evan's question about his forebear's Northumberland home in 'Q&A' (**page 44**) encouraged me to 'walk' the street using Google Street View. Using old Ordnance Survey maps and Google Maps together, you can often track down and see the houses your family lived in. I was also excited by the release this month of more recent OS maps from the National Library of Scotland ('News', **page 11**). It was fascinating to see maps of Bristol from 1949 showing the wartime damage the city was still living with.

OS maps of England and Wales put online for free

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For many of us researching our family history, we wouldn't want to be without the wealth of records on the main paid-for genealogy websites, but subscription costs shouldn't put anyone off this fascinating hobby. I hope our article on free websites (**page 14**) will inspire you all to explore what's available.

This month, we head off on a two-day genealogy jaunt to Dublin (**page 19**). This was inspired by a reader who wrote in asking for advice on how to get the most out of a trip to Ireland. Get in touch if you've got topics you would like us to cover.

I'm starting to get excited about the Olympics this summer (enjoy our short history of the event on **page 52**), so the 'Best Websites' article on **page 35** was just what I needed to get me thinking about my sporting ancestors. I've got a champion tennis player and some jockeys in my tree, plus a handful of keen amateur cricket players whose successes (and failures) I have followed in local newspapers. Do tell us all about the sporting men and women you've uncovered, because we love to hear about and share your family stories.

And finally, we are super excited about the new series of *Who Do You Think You Are?* (**page 10**). Don't miss next month when we go behind the scenes of upcoming episodes, and share some of our favourite moments from the past 20 series. Enjoy the issue!

Sarah

Sarah Williams Editor
sarah.williams@ourmedia.co.uk

Contributors

Jonathan Scott
A regular contributor to *Who Do You Think You Are? Magazine* and author of *The Family History Web Directory*, Jonathan shares some of his favourite free websites on **page 14**.

Nicola Morris
Often busy doing Irish research for the TV series, Nicola is just the person to guide you on a research trip to Dublin (**page 19**) where she is a director of Timeline Research (**timeline.ie**).

Simon Wills
Simon has been our maritime expert for over 10 years, and consults on the TV series. On **page 29** he sets out on the high seas looking for treasure in the form of privateers' records.

COVER IMAGE: GETTY IMAGES/ANGELA MANSELLE IS GIVEN THE BUMPS ON MORECAMBE BEACH, 10 AUGUST 1957

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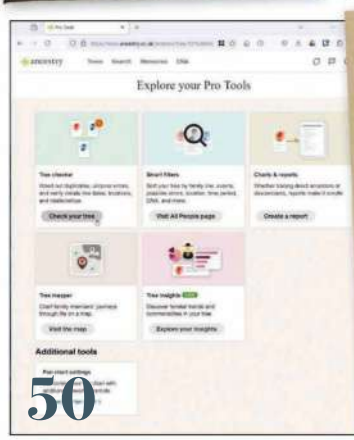

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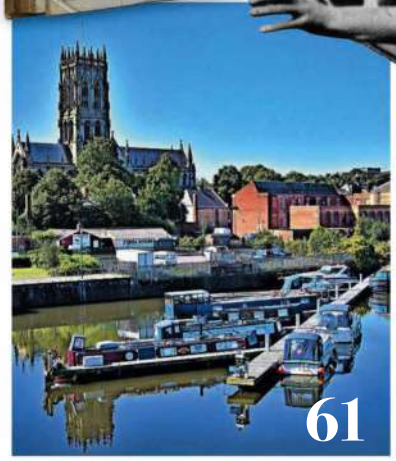

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Email *wdytyaeditorial@ourmedia.co.uk*

Write to *WDYTYA? Magazine*, Eagle House, Bristol BS1 4ST

WIN an AncestryDNA test kit from **ancestry.co.uk** **WORTH £79**

The writer of our star letter wins an AncestryDNA test **worth £79** – so drop us a line and share your thoughts with us.

Rosie thinks that the woman on the edge of our photo is her grandmother Ellen Allen, shown above with future husband Ernest Denney *(centre)* and her brother John

STAR LETTER

Woolwich Arsenal Identity Spotted

As I was reading the May issue of your magazine, I squealed with delight when I turned to the 'Local Industry' article and saw the picture of the women working at Woolwich Arsenal in 1918.

My grandmother, Ellen Allen, worked there at the time, and I'm pretty sure she is the woman standing to the far right of the photo.

You can see the similarity if you compare the picture you published to a photograph I have of Ellen, taken in about 1927, with her youngest brother and her future husband, my grandfather *(pictured above right)*.

Ellen was born in 1898, in North Woolwich, the second of 11 children. Her parents were both born in County Cork, before moving to London for a new life. Her father worked at the gasworks in North Woolwich and her mother (before marriage) in service at Syon House in Brentford.

Ellen's older brother, Michael, fought in the First World War for the Irish Guards. The two eldest girls, Ellen and her sister Susan, worked at Woolwich Arsenal. A ferry would take them from North Woolwich over the Thames for work each day.

I'm pretty sure Ellen is the woman standing to the far right of the photo

Ellen died in 1965. Her only son, Allen, my father, is still alive at the age of 92 and, thank goodness, remains very sharp and full of memories. He remembers his mum as being a hard worker, looking after her family, earning money and helping out her younger siblings. My dad grew up in London during the Second World War – he wasn't evacuated from the city – and he was bombed out of his home three times, the last by a V2 in 1945. I'm very proud of them both, and feel lucky that they made it through such challenging times.

Thank you so much for including this article. I'd love to find out more about what life was like at the factory, so I hope that other readers are able to share what they know.

Rosie Smith née Denney, Leicestershire

Editor Replies I have to agree Rosie that the similarity is striking. We haven't had any other readers write in yet regarding the Woolwich Arsenal, but thank you for sharing your grandmother's story.

Decency Forbids!

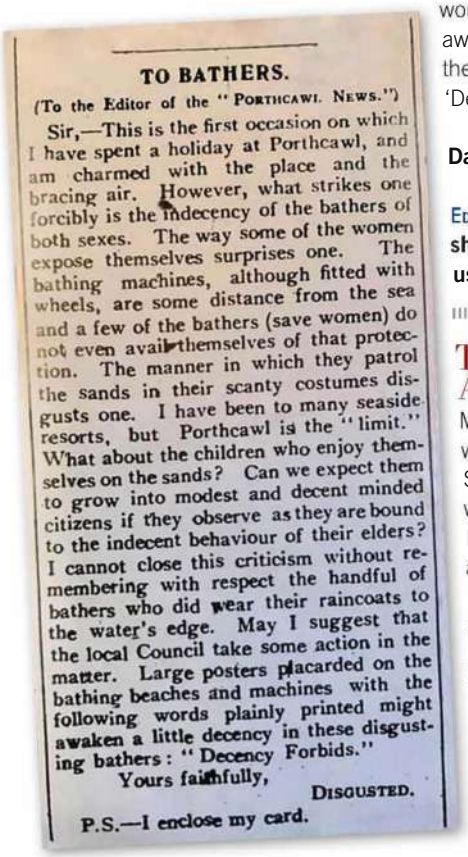
I enjoyed Caroline Roope's feature on beach huts in your July issue, and I thought readers might appreciate this newspaper cutting from a 1916 edition of the *Porthcawl News*. It reads:

"Sir, – This is the first occasion on which I have spent a holiday at Porthcawl, and am charmed with the place and the bracing air. However, what strikes one forcibly is the indecency of the bathers of both sexes. The way some of the women expose themselves surprises one. The Bathing machines, although fitted with wheels, are some distance from the sea and a few of the bathers (save women) do not even avail themselves of that protection. The manner in which they patrol the sands in their scanty costumes disgusts one. I have been to many seaside resorts, but Porthcawl is the 'limit'. What about the children who enjoy themselves on the sands? Can we expect them to grow into modest and decent minded citizens if they observe as they are bound to the indecent behaviour of their elders? I cannot close this criticism without remembering with respect the handful of bathers who did wear their raincoats to the water's edge. May I suggest that the local Council take some action in the matter. Large posters placarded on the bathing beaches and machines with the following words plainly printed might awaken a little decency in these disgusting bathers: 'Decency Forbids.'"

How times have changed!

David Swidenbank, by email

Editor Replies Thank you for sharing this David. It made us all laugh in the office.



TO BATHERS.

(To the Editor of the "Porthcawl News.")

Sir,—This is the first occasion on which I have spent a holiday at Porthcawl, and am charmed with the place and the bracing air. However, what strikes one forcibly is the indecency of the bathers of both sexes. The way some of the women expose themselves surprises one. The bathing machines, although fitted with wheels, are some distance from the sea and a few of the bathers (save women) do not even avail themselves of that protection. The manner in which they patrol the sands in their scanty costumes disgusts one. I have been to many seaside resorts, but Porthcawl is the "limit." What about the children who enjoy themselves on the sands? Can we expect them to grow into modest and decent minded citizens if they observe as they are bound to the indecent behaviour of their elders? I cannot close this criticism without remembering with respect the handful of bathers who did wear their raincoats to the water's edge. May I suggest that the local Council take some action in the matter. Large posters placarded on the bathing beaches and machines with the following words plainly printed might awaken a little decency in these disgusting bathers: "Decency Forbids."

Yours faithfully,

DISGUSTED.

P.S.—I enclose my card.

David spotted this letter complaining about bathers' "indecency" in a Welsh newspaper

One of the documents that Linda's mother Gilberte Loxley required to travel from Belgium to the UK as a war bride

The Documents Of A War Bride

My mother, Gilberte Loxley, was a war bride of the Second World War, and when I was clearing her house after she went into a nursing home, I found the documents that were needed for my parents' journey from Belgium to the UK. Other countries would have had similar arrangements, and I thought readers who are descendants of war brides might like to see them.

Unfortunately, by the time I came across these documents, it was too late to ask my mother, who had Alzheimer's, about her experiences. I had to rely on what was said earlier, and piece things together. She was 97 when she passed away in 2020 from Covid-19.

Linda Farrar, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire

Editor Replies Thank you Linda for sharing your precious documents with us. I'm afraid we don't have space to print them all, but we've included our favourite with the photograph of your mother.

Andrea Lane was delighted to read about the stars in the upcoming series of *WDYTYA?* – see page 10
Fabulous news. I love this. Addicted to it.

Delayed Baptisms

In your "Top Tip" about delayed baptisms on page 3 of the July issue, you wrote, "I wonder if the church had been chasing them." I have come across quite a few instances of delayed baptisms, and can offer a couple of potential reasons why this happened.

Sometimes it is obvious in a multiple-baptism that the youngest child is newly born. In these cases it would appear that a decision to baptise the new arrival had prompted the incumbent to ask if the older children had been baptised. Perhaps the family may have recently moved to the area.

Sometimes this coincides with the appointment of a new incumbent who, perhaps, was more zealous than previous ones, or may have had a religious approach more acceptable to the particular family. An enthusiastic young parson might make a point of visiting all the houses in his new parish, partly to introduce himself, and partly to encourage more attendance at his church and, in the process, discover unbaptised family members.

There are also occasional cases of an adult baptism which shortly precedes a marriage – clearly this was essential where the bride or groom could not prove that they had already been baptised.

Philip Eley, Gosport, Hampshire

Editor Replies Thank you Philip. It's good to remind people of the reasons they may need to extend their searches for baptisms.

Remittance Men

In Gemma Noon's 'Focus On' article (July), she mentioned that British aristocrats' sons who misbehaved might be sent to the Canadian West. This was not ▶

the only colony where so-called 'remittance men' were sent. I researched a wool merchant in Bradford, and his wayward son was sent to New Zealand.

Fred Percival Towler (known as Percy) was born in 1901. He had been to Cambridge, but got into trouble through drink. In 1929, when he was 28, he was in Wellington, New Zealand, and the newspaper records show that he was charged with theft of clothing. Many criminal offences occurred thereafter through to 1941. These were petty thefts, mostly clothes or bedding from boarding houses, and he was sentenced to prison on several occasions. In court he was represented, presumably paid by his father, and one article states that "he is a remittance man getting about £2 a week". Remittance men were generally of dissolute or drunken character.

Percy passed away in 1960 in Auckland, and the certificate shows him a retired general labourer who, not surprisingly, died of portal cirrhosis. Probate shows he left £2,000.

Sheila Patchett, by email

Percy Towler with his parents outside their house on the outskirts of Bradford

@GrahamTutthill responded to our article about workhouse records (tinyurl.com/wdytya-wh)
My great grandfather was born in a workhouse which puzzled me. But I learnt from one of the episodes of @WDYTYA_UK that unmarried mothers went there to have their babies.

Editor Replies **It's sad that young men who were clearly already troubled were sent far away from family and friends so that they couldn't disgrace their fathers.**

Mass Observation

I read the 'Gem from the Archive' article in the June issue about the Bedfordshire housewife's Second World War diary with some interest, because I am one of 500 current Mass Observation volunteers. The project (**massobs.org.uk**) was set up in 1937 with a view to recording how the population were coping with the upcoming war. It ran until the 1960s, then was revived by the University of Sussex in 1981. Victoria Wood won a BAFTA Award in 2007 for her performance in *Housewife, 49,* re-enacting the diary kept by Nella Last of Barrow-in-Furness.

Volunteers get a set of subjects to make observations on three times a year and the results are all anonymised for 50 years, so we are only known by a number. Responses are based on individuals' experiences and those that they observe in their communities, and are used in a range of research projects from government to industry to universities. Recent topics have included retirement, the royal coronation, digital technologies in our homes, seasons, recent war conflicts, clothing and personal appearance, and everyday living with multiple long-term health conditions.

Sue Thornley, by email

Editor Replies **I'm glad the article chimed with you. I love Mass Observation and what volunteers like yourself are doing.**

Weeding Woe

I refer to a practice I came across some years ago in the Scottish Record Office (now the National Records of Scotland) in Edinburgh. I was researching an illegitimacy in my family with Sheriff Court records; in Scotland the parish church would go to the Sheriff Court for an order for maintenance in disputed cases, to avoid having to pay out from church funds. I finally located the box that the file of court papers would be in and duly ordered it, but it was almost empty except for one file involving a baronet.

I asked the attendant why my file wasn't there, and was told that the box had been "weeded". He summoned a superior, who explained that only files relating to the nobility and other important people had been retained. All else had been destroyed.

This practice seems very wrong, especially as the lone item was housed in the original box, so no space was saved! I don't know how prevalent weeding was; I have never come across another instance, thank goodness. It did, however, provide a brick wall, especially as the offending male was named John Smith!

John A Cousins, by email

Editor Replies **The very idea of 'weeding' leaves me with a feeling of dread. Who can judge what information will be important at a later date?**

YOUR LETTER IN PRINT We reserve the right to edit any letters sent to the magazine. Messages posted to our Facebook wall and tweets sent to us may also appear in print. The choice of Star Letter is the editor's and the prize is subject to change.

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What's On

Email *wdytyaeditorial@ourmedia.co.uk* to feature your event here for free

PICK OF THE MONTH

The FHF Really Useful Show comes to Belfast

FHF Really Useful Family History Show

10 August

a **Europa Hotel Belfast**
t 01263 824951
w **fhf-reallyuseful.com/2024-live**

The Family History Federation (FHF) is holding various in-person and virtual events to celebrate its 50th anniversary this year, including this show in Northern Ireland. In the lead talk, volunteer Tim McGarry will have his family history presented to him live, as if he were starring in a *Who Do You Think You Are?* episode. Following autosomal and Y-DNA tests as well as traditional records-based research, the North of Ireland Family History Society will tell McGarry his ancestry, including cousins he never knew he had and notable connections from the past. There will also be exhibition stalls from a number of family history organisations. Free.

IN PERSON

Lost Victorian City: A London Disappeared

Until 5 February 2025

a **London Metropolitan Archives**
t 020 7332 3820
w **tinyurl.com/lma-lost-victorian-city**

This exhibition takes a look at the documents preserved by London Metropolitan Archives that reveal the 'lost city' of Victorian London, including photographs, maps and building records. Free.

Heritage Tour Of Leeds Central Library

17 July

a **Leeds Central Library**
t 0113 378 5005
w **tinyurl.com/leeds-inspired-library-tour**

You can discover the history and architecture of the Grade II-listed library, and hear about some of its famous visitors, on this tour, which will last about an hour. £5.

The Story Of The Prunier Herring Trophy, 1936 To 1966 – A Celebration Of Men, Ships And Fish

20 July

a **Lowestoft Archives**
t 01502 674680
w **https://www.suffolkarchives.co.uk/whats-on/**

Local historian Ivan Bunn will discuss Lowestoft's maritime history at this event. Free.

Manchester & Lancashire Family History Society

24 July

a **Manchester Central Library**
w **mlfhs.uk/manchester/events/meetings**

The society is running two talks on 24 July: 'The Story of Cheetham Hill Road' by Martin Gittins (starts at 10.30am) and 'Annie Horniman, Theatre Pioneer' by Jean Bailo (starts at 1pm). £5 each, or free for members of the society.

Revolutionary England – A Day Of Talks

27 July

a **Southwark Cathedral**
t 020 7367 6700
w **tinyurl.com/eventbrite-swk-revolutionary**

Learn about life in the turbulent days of Revolutionary England following the Civil War with Dr Jonathan Healey, Dr Miranda Malins, Prof. Clare Jackson and Dr Benjamin Woolley. £23.71.

Using Funeral Directors' And Burial Records For Research

3 August

a **Dartford Science and Technology College**
t 01322 527604
w **tinyurl.com/nwkfhs-funeral-directors**

This talk by Brian Parsons is free to North West Kent Family History Society members; non-members are asked for a small donation.

Shoreham Fort

14 August

a **Central United Reformed Church, Hove**
w **sfhg.uk/events/brighton-hove-meeting-centre**

Gary Baines, chairman of the Friends of Shoreham Fort, will reveal the history of the fort and the Sussex Volunteer Artillery who were stationed there in this Sussex Family History Group event. Free.

IN PERSON & ONLINE

A First For England: How A Church Became A Museum

17 July

a **Norfolk Record Office**
t 01603 222599
w **tinyurl.com/eventbrite-nro-peter-hungate**

Uncover the history of St Peter Hungate, Norwich, with this hybrid talk from Dr Clare Haynes. Free.

ONLINE

Society Of Genealogists

Various dates

w **members.sog.org.uk/events**

Upcoming virtual talks from the Society of Genealogists include 'Sports Records at The National Archives with Keith Mitchell' (20 July), 'Tracing Your Potteries Ancestors with Mike Sharpe' (25 July) and 'Discovering Manorial Records – Working Back from 1926 to 1089! with Jackie Depelle' (1 August). Prices vary.

Leo Hickman: How I Solved The Mystery Of My German POW Grandfather

18 July

w **tinyurl.com/event-brite-hick**

The journalist will explain how he identified his father's birth parents in this follow-up to his recent *Guardian* article about his tree (**tinyurl.com/guard-hick**). £6.13.

World War Two RAF Records For Family Historians Workshop

20 July

w **tinyurl.com/berksfhs-ww2-raf-rec-workshop**

Historian Dr Richard Marks shares his expert advice for using RAF records in your research in this wide-ranging talk. £9 for members of Berkshire Family History Society, £10 for non-members.

Leaving No Stone Unturned

27 July

w **tinyurl.com/eventbrite-herts-fhs-unturned**

In this event from Hertfordshire Family History Society, John Pearson explains how to record memorial inscriptions. Free.

BOOK AHEAD

Find out more about DNA testing with this online course

Unexpected DNA Results With Michelle Leonard

Starts 22 August

w **tinyurl.com/sog-unexpected-dna**

In this three-week evening course from the Society of Genealogists, Michelle Leonard will guide you through how to understand surprising DNA test results and what they mean for your family history. £32 for members, £40 for non-members.

News

Rosemary Collins and **Becky George** report on data releases and genealogy news

BBC reveals the stars of the upcoming series of *Who Do You Think You Are?*

The celebrity line-up for the 21st series of *Who Do You Think You Are?*, due to be broadcast on BBC One this summer, has been announced.

In the new series, seven celebrities will trace family stories ranging from circus antics to embezzlement, a life-changing accident, the Cold War and stirring tales of triumph against the odds. They will travel around the world, including to Ireland, Taiwan, Jamaica and Latvia.

Melanie Chisholm or 'Mel C', who was Sporty Spice in world-conquering 1990s pop group the Spice Girls, will discover a political activist ancestor and the story of how her family survived the Great Famine in Ireland.

Olly Murs, another singer–songwriter, will travel to Latvia and find circus-performing ancestors.

Line of Duty and *Trigger Point* actor Vicky McClure will discover her great grandfather's harrowing experiences as a prisoner of the Japanese during the Second World War.

Olympic gold medallist Jessica Ennis-Hill will travel to Jamaica and learn about her relative's journey from being enslaved to owning his own land, while *The Only Way is Essex* star Gemma Collins will investigate her roots in the eponymous county.

Former Spice Girl Melanie Chisholm will be exploring her family tree in the 21st series of *WDYTYA?*

Comedian and presenter Paddy McGuinness will learn the truth about his grandfather's role in the Second World War and his surname's origins, while *Strictly Come Dancing* winner, *EastEnders* actor and disability-rights campaigner Rose Ayling-Ellis uncovers an *EastEnders*-style incident in a pub.

WDYTYA? was first broadcast in 2004. Simon Young, BBC head of history, factual commissioning, said, "This year we have a stellar line-up to mark 20 years of the nation's favourite social history series. Time and again it proves the old adage that truth is stranger than fiction, while helping us all to understand the history of Britain and the world much better."

Colette Flight, executive producer for Wall to Wall Media, which makes the show, said, "In our 20th year on air, we're delighted to be back with more of Britain's most popular celebrities investigating their family trees. As always, we've revealed extraordinary stories and moments from history that we've never told before, and the celebrities have been moved to tears, laughter, anger and joy."

For the latest updates subscribe to our email newsletter via the 'Sign me up!' button at the bottom of our homepage (**whodoyouthinkyouaremagazine.com**). You can also follow us on Facebook (**facebook.com/whodoyouthinkyouaremagazine**) and X (**x.com/wdytyamagazine**).

The other celebrities who will be researching their ancestry are *(clockwise from top left)* Rose Ayling-Ellis, Vicky McClure, Paddy McGuinness, Jessica Ennis-Hill, Gemma Collins and Olly Murs

GETTY IMAGES

NEWS IN BRIEF

An 1843 Methodist burial register

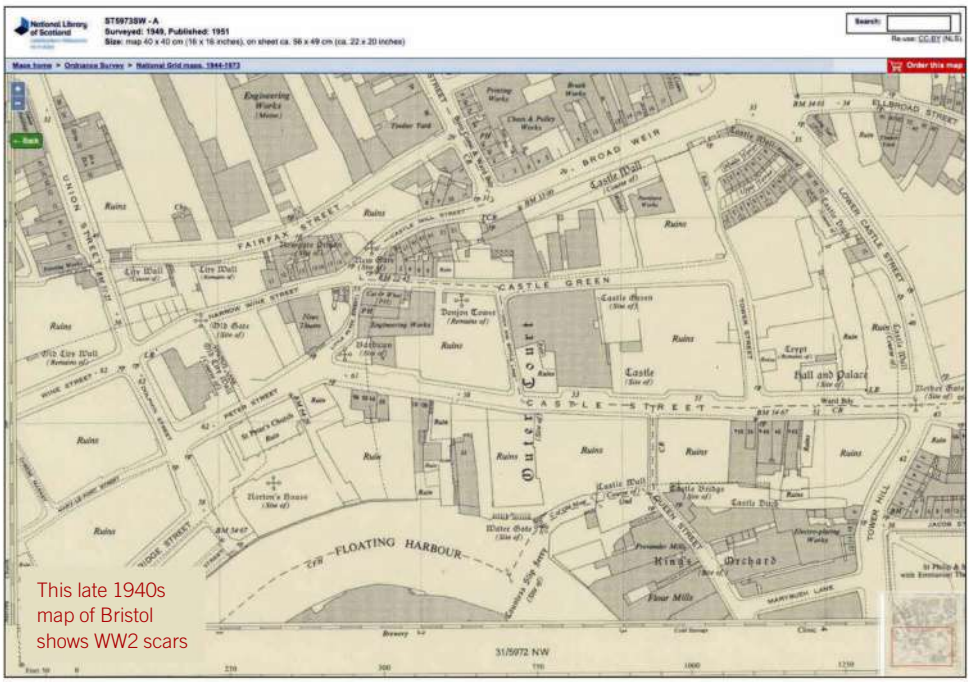
Ancestry adds Lancashire nonconformist records

Family history website Ancestry (**ancestry.co.uk**) has released a new collection of 447,396 nonconformist records from Lancashire. The records date from 1762–2005 and include baptisms, marriages and burials. They are a useful resource for tracing the lives of ancestors who didn't worship in the Church of England. The records are primarily Methodist. The collection can be searched by name, and includes digitised images of the records.

The new chief executive Philip Spedding

Society of Genealogists names new chief executive

London-based charity the Society of Genealogists (**sog.org.uk**) has appointed a new chief executive. Philip Spedding, former director of development at The London Library and executive director at Arts & Business, started his new role on 1 July. He has 25 years' experience in the creative and cultural sectors, including through holding senior roles at organisations such as Tate, the Charities Aid Foundation and the British Library.



This late 1940s map of Bristol shows WW2 scars

OS maps of England and Wales put online for free

A major new collection of 137,859 Ordnance Survey (OS) maps of England and Wales dating from the 1940s to the 1970s has gone online.

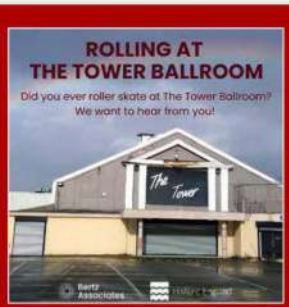
The maps were published on the National Library of Scotland's (NLS's) maps website (**maps.nls.uk/os/national-grid**), which offers free access to old maps of Britain.

All urban areas with more than about 20,000 inhabitants were mapped at 1:1,250 scale, and all other inhabited areas and cultivated land were mapped at 1:2,500 scale. At 1:1,250 scale, most detached features covering 1 square metre (10.7 square feet) or larger are usually shown, and house numbers are often included.

Chris Fleet, map curator at the NLS, said, "These are the most detailed OS maps which cover all areas of England and Wales after the Second World War, and they provide an unrivalled insight into towns and settlements in the mid-20th century."

"The NLS is very keen to share our map collections with the widest possible audiences, and we hope these new online maps will be of great interest for a wide range of research purposes," he added.

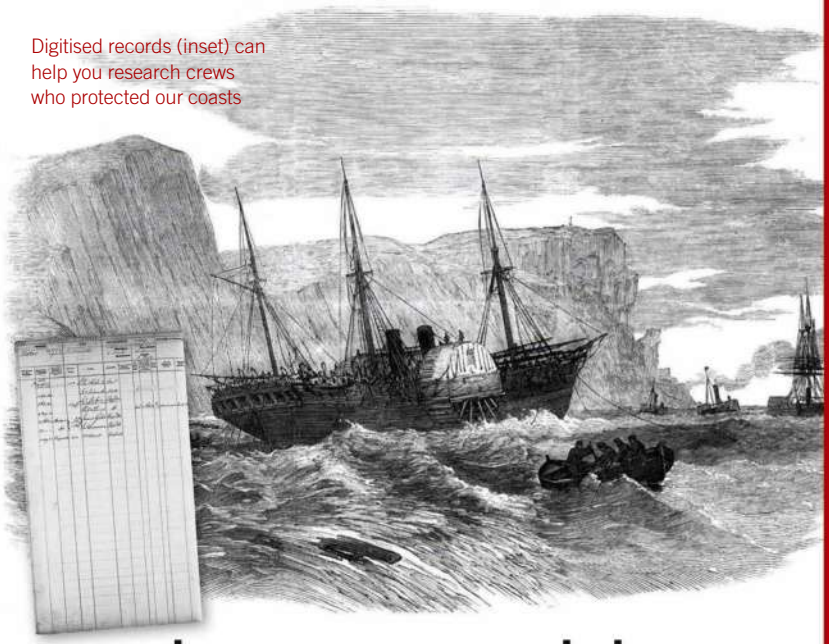
CAN YOU HELP?



Did you, or your relations, go skating at the Tower Ballroom?

Birmingham-based arts and culture organisation Bertz Associates (**www.bertzassociates.net**) is hoping to hear from members of the public about their memories of roller skating at the recently demolished Tower Ballroom at Edgbaston Reservoir. The aim is to include stories from local people focusing on the history of roller skating in Birmingham. These would be used in a short documentary film, funded by an Everyday Heritage Grant from Historic England. The ballroom opened in 1876 as the Edgbaston Roller Rink. In the 1980s, it hosted roller-skating events, concerts, boxing matches and beauty pageants. It finally closed in 2017. Bertz Associates is also keen to hear from anyone with related photographs, home films, memorabilia and objects. You can enter submissions at **bit.ly/bertz-skating**, email your stories to *projects@bertzassociates.net* or call 0121 572 0685.

SOCIETY OF GENEALOGISTS / BERTZ ASSOCIATES



Digitised records (inset) can help you research crews who protected our coasts

Findmypast adds Coastguard records

Family history website Findmypast (findmypast.co.uk) has added a set of 212,426 records from HM Coastguard, dating from 1801–1952.

The record collection includes searchable digitised copies of the original records, which are held in The National Archives (TNA) at Kew in series ADM 175.

HM Coastguard was formed in 1822 by amalgamating three services that worked to combat smuggling: Riding Officers, who patrolled the coast on horseback; Customs Revenue Cruisers, who patrolled the waters; and the Preventive Water Guard, which the Board of Customs introduced in 1809. The Findmypast collection includes records from these predecessor organisations.

The types of record include establishment books, ships' record books, registers of nominations for appointments, service records of Royal Navy ratings and Royal Marines who transferred to HM Coastguard, and registers of coastguards who were discharged in 1919 following the end of the First World War.

Suffolk Archives' branches to close

Suffolk County Council has decided to shut Suffolk Archives' branches at Lowestoft and Bury St Edmunds, and transfer their collections to the archives facility The Hold in Ipswich (**tinyurl.com/suff-arch-hold**). The closures were announced in January, as part of the council's "difficult decisions" to save £64.7 million, and opposed by local campaigners. The two branches will shut by the end of August, and Suffolk Archives explained that the archives and the John Blatchly Local Studies Library areas at The Hold will close to the public for three months from the beginning of October to facilitate the move.

Suffolk Archives' Ipswich facility The Hold

1.8 million

The number of Army List records (1837–1959) added to **the genealogist.co.uk**

Sergeant John Smith

The remains of a British First World War soldier found in a cave in France have been identified with DNA testing (**tinyurl.com/glos-live-sgt**)

The Story

Durham's new archive building has opened in a manor house (**tinyurl.com/bbc-dur-stor**)

23andMe

The DNA-testing company is being investigated by privacy watchdogs after a data breach (**tinyurl.com/sw-argus-23**)

Alberta Sturges Montagu

The Archives & Records Association has given its Volunteering Award to a project digitising the 9th Countess of Sandwich's letters (**tinyurl.com/bbc-asm**)

Some of the images added to the website

Free online archive shares stories from WW2

A free-to-access digital archive featuring more than 25,000 objects and 2,000 stories capturing ordinary people's experiences during the Second World War has gone online.

Their Finest Hour (**theirfinesthour.english.ox.ac.uk**) is the result of a two-year research project by Oxford University.

More than 500 volunteers ran 73 digital-collection days across Britain, where members of the public brought family photographs and artefacts to be digitised for the website.

In addition, over 750 people uploaded their stories and objects directly onto the site.

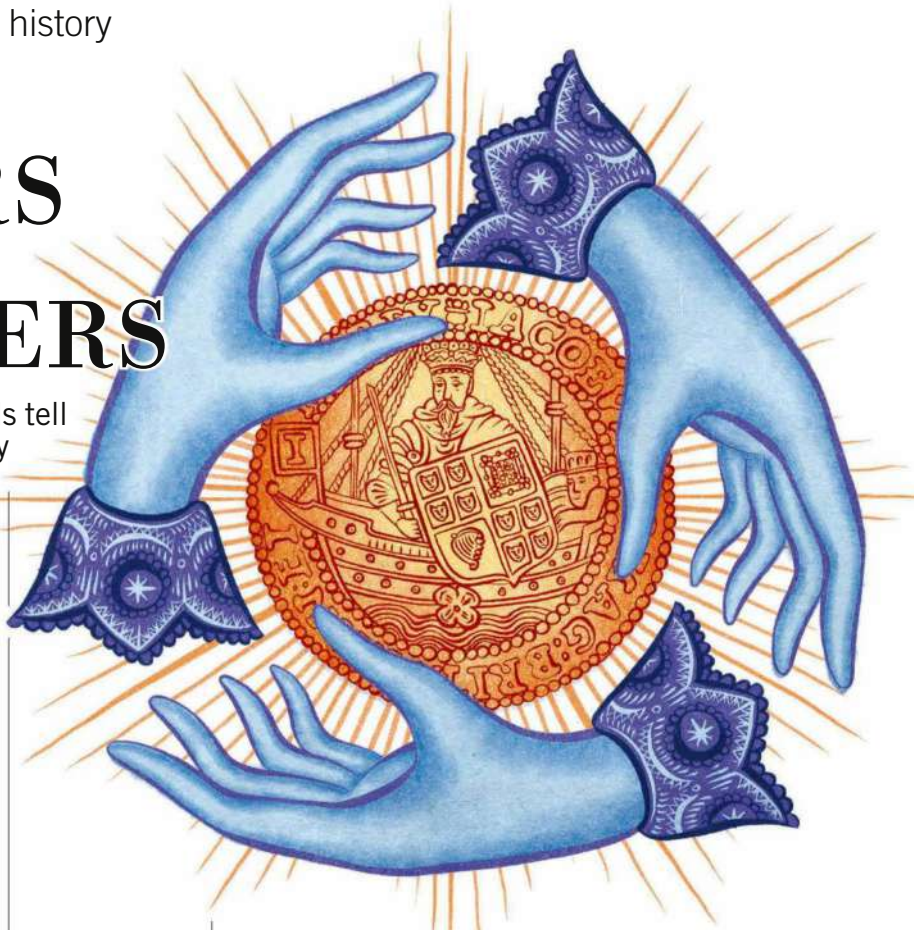
You can input text to search the material, or view it by theme ('D-Day', 'Britain Under Fire' or 'Women's Experiences'), keyword tag (eg 'Battle of Britain' or 'Conscientious objectors') or location gathered.

Project director Dr Stuart Lee commented, "Very few families in Britain and across the Commonwealth were untouched by the war. We knew from previous projects that people have so many wonderful objects, photos and anecdotes which have been passed down from family members and which are at risk of getting lost or being forgotten. We're delighted that we have been able to preserve so many of these stories and objects and make them available to the public through our archive."

GETTY IMAGES / SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL / THEIR FINEST HOUR

Borrowers And Lenders

Alan Crosby reveals what our ancestors' wills tell us about how they lent and borrowed money



Last month I wrote about the emergence of penny savings banks at the beginning of the 19th century, aimed at encouraging the principles of thrift and financial caution among the working classes. The first of these banks were founded a few decades after the establishment of the early major commercial banking houses such as Barclays. But before the early 18th century there was no organised private banking system in Britain – and therefore no institutional mechanism for borrowing or lending.

Lending money at interest was frowned upon and condemned as sinful by the medieval Church. In the 16th century in England the practice was made legal, but it was still surrounded by much wariness and suspicion. Nonetheless, there were always those who needed to borrow money, and those who had the spare cash to lend. We see the results in many probate inventories, from the early 16th century to the middle of the 18th. These often reveal not only the debts owed by testators but also the sums owed to them. From that evidence we can begin to build up a picture of local finance networks, showing how certain individuals acted as 'banks in miniature' for their local community.

Those higher up the scale could be on unstable ground financially

There were sound reasons for these private arrangements. In the absence of financial institutions, most people could only borrow money from individuals, and in many cases both parties naturally preferred to do business with someone they knew already, or who was known and trusted locally. On the other hand, someone seriously embarrassed about financial difficulties, who did not want their borrowing known to friends and neighbours, would readily try to find a lender who lived some distance away.

Most borrowing and lending involved actual money – there were no banknotes and no bank accounts, so transactions depended on coins changing hands. Some coins of high value were of little practical use for spending in shops or markets, but larger debts and borrowings might use them; for example gold sovereigns in the 16th century, or guineas following their introduction in 1663. Money might therefore be saved in the form of gold or silver coins, while small copper coins were used for everyday expenditure.

How might surplus cash work for you? If you lent it out and charged interest, you did not have to keep the coins at home (which was an obvious security risk), and you would be making a profit. Some people, with plenty of spare money, might begin to lend it as a form of business, becoming known in their area as the potential source of a loan.

The lists of debts at the foot of probate inventories frequently demonstrate that 'ordinary' people might lend money to their social superiors. Those higher up the social scale, including the local gentry, could well be on unstable ground financially, but would not want the wider world to know their precarious position. A discreet loan, to tide them over the difficulties brought about by an expensive lifestyle and extravagance, might be the solution. Other debts could be the result of a crisis, such as loss of income when a person was sick or injured and therefore could not work.

For larger sums it was usual to draw up a written agreement that specified the amount involved, the interest rate and the arrangements for repayment. This is often called a 'debt by bond' or a 'debt with specialty', and if the terms were not fulfilled legal action would be an option for the recovery of the debt. But many smaller loans were made purely by verbal agreement, often without witnesses present.

The lender might mention these in his or her will, but what was the proof that the transaction had ever taken place? If the borrower denied all knowledge, the lender's heir had few means of collecting the debt. Not without reason were these often, in probate inventories, termed "desperate debts"!

ALAN CROSBY lives in Lancashire and is the editor of *The Local Historian*

ILLUSTRATION **WWW.SUEGENT.COM**

THE BEST FREE WEBSITES TO FIND YOUR FAMILY

Jonathan Scott reveals the free websites you can't afford to miss

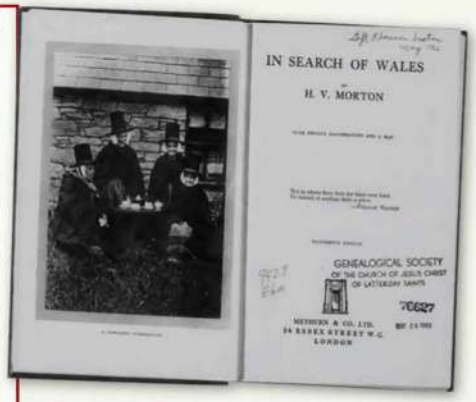
Every now and then it can be valuable to step back and marvel at where we are. Just a few years ago, family historians had to spend a significant amount of time travelling to repositories to consult the records they needed in person, all with no guarantee of success. Today, the rapid growth of digitisation has changed everything. For example, researchers living anywhere in the world can now trawl a database of 65 million passengers arriving in New York between 1820 and 1957 using the website Ellis Island Passenger Search (**heritage.statueofliberty.org/passenger**) – without paying a single penny.

Here we've brought together some of the most useful free websites out there, from generalists to specialists. It should be noted, however, that many of the commercial websites that won't make this round-up – such as Ancestry (**ancestry.co.uk**), Findmypast (**findmypast.co.uk**), ScotlandsPeople (**scotlandspeople.gov.uk**) and TheGenealogist (**thegenealogist.co.uk**) – offer generous helpings of free data themselves. And much of the rest of their material can be accessed for free via your local library.

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

w **cwgc.org**

The CWGC's website allows you to search records of the 1.7 million Commonwealth men and women who died in the world wars. You can enter a surname alone, or add other details such as service number, regiment or rank. Search returns can be filtered into close or exact matches, and you can download all the results as a spreadsheet. You can also upload the fruits of your research to For Evermore (**www.cwgc.org/stories**).



FamilySearch

w **familysearch.org**

The billions of records on the largest free genealogical website include countless birth, marriage and death records transcribed from parish registers, many with free-to-view digitised images. FamilySearch has spent years digitising its own enormous library of microfilmed records, and is currently focused on testing AI tools to help speed up indexing projects. One of our own Transcription Tuesday collaborations saw volunteers transcribe 72,812 merchant crew lists dating from 1857.

Free UK Genealogy

w **freeukgenealogy.org.uk**

This is the parent site for a trio of powerful free portals that allow users to research civil birth, marriage and death records (FreeBMD; **freebmd.org.uk**), census records (FreeCEN; **freecen.org.uk**) and parish register transcriptions (FreeREG; **freereg.org.uk**). Each one has millions of volunteer-transcribed and indexed records, with numbers expanding all the time. Some counties have better coverage than others – if you find a gap, why not offer your help?

Historical Directories Of England & Wales

w **tinyurl.com/sco-directories**

The University of Leicester's site Special Collections Online offers access to 689 directories from the 1760s to the 1910s, organised by county. They can help you confirm ancestors' addresses, and uncover references to businesses and occupations. They also contain names of prominent local officials, and advertisements.

GETTY IMAGES

BILLIONGRAVES

w **billiongraves.com**

BillionGraves is a massive and ever-expanding database of searchable GPS cemetery data fuelled by an army of volunteers submitting photographs and transcriptions. It's not the only kid on the block – similar projects include Find A Grave (**findagrave.com**) and Interment.net (**interment.net**).

Chronicling America

w **tinyurl.com/us-loc-chron**

This US Library of Congress hub offers free access to more than 21 million pages from over 4,000 newspaper titles published across the country between 1756 and 1963. It's obviously an unmissable resource if you know your family migrated across the pond. But even if they did not, this is a great place to explore how the past was reported.

BRITISH HISTORY ONLINE

w **british-history.ac.uk**

BHO offers access to all sorts of digitised material, including important secondary sources such as the Victoria County History of England. An upgrade to the website and a move to a new server in February 2024 have caused some problems with the search function, but the old site is being kept going while staff iron out the kinks (**archive.british-history.ac.uk**).

National Library Of Scotland

w **nls.uk**

NLS has powered through several digitisation projects over the years, which have produced a number of useful free tools for researchers. These include more than 700 digitised Post Office trade directories from 1773–1911 (**digital.nls.uk/directories**); the ever-expanding Maps portal (**maps.nls.uk**), which includes detailed Ordnance Survey mapping for the whole of the UK; and British Military Lists (**digital.nls.uk/british-military-lists/archive/97343435**), where you can find lists of officers who were active during the world wars.

Civil War Petitions

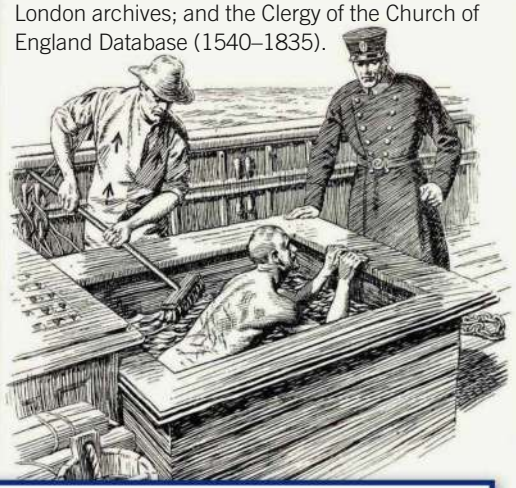
w **www.civilwarpetitions.ac.uk**

After the English Civil Wars thousands of petitions asking for financial help were presented to the authorities, often from former soldiers suffering life-changing injuries, or their bereaved widows and orphans. At this website you can search and read original petitions, together with lists of recipients of quarterly pensions or one-off payments.

Connected Histories

w **connectedhistories.org**

Connected Histories brings together a range of sources from 1500–1900. Some are behind a paywall, but free datasets include 123,000 convicts transported to Australia (1787–1867); London Lives 1690–1800, which contains 3.5 million names from manuscripts held within eight London archives; and the Clergy of the Church of England Database (1540–1835).



LITTLE GEMS Regional

Check out these five websites that showcase the free resources available for particular regions

York Cause Papers

w **dhi.ac.uk/causepapers**

Search a free catalogue of more than 14,000 papers from cases heard in the church courts of the Diocese of York (1300–1858).

Hearth Tax Digital

w **gams.uni-graz.at/context:htx**

Hearth-tax returns from 1662–1674 provide a useful census of heads of families. This ongoing project already has data from many counties.

London Picture Archive

w **londonpicturearchive.org.uk**

Among the more than 250,000 searchable images here are 80,000 photos from London County Council.

PRONI

w **tinyurl.com/nidirect-proni-arch-online**

The Public Record Office of Northern Ireland's free-to-view highlights include a database of will calendars from 1858–1965.

Sheffield Indexers

w **sheffieldindexers.com**

This site provides data from a raft of sources such as census returns, burial records and memorial inscriptions, parish records, schools and directories.

GETTY IMAGES

National Library Of Wales

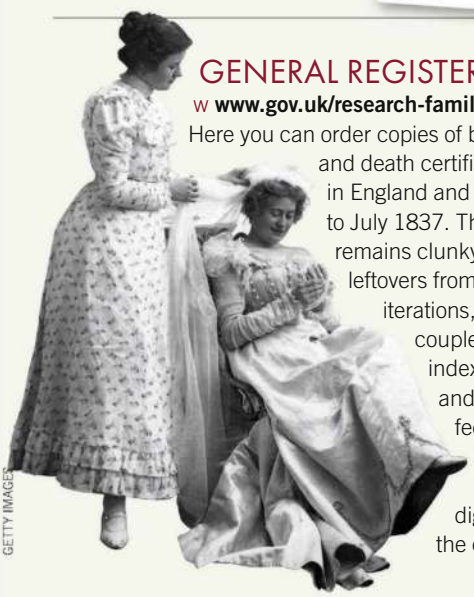
w **library.wales**

Similar to its Scottish counterpart, NLW has several useful research tools. Perhaps the highlight is Welsh Newspapers (**newspapers.library.wales**), where you can search 15 million Welsh newspaper articles, narrowing by title, region or date, or restricting your searches to publications in Welsh or English. Elsewhere you can search wills proved in Welsh Ecclesiastical courts before 1858 and explore high-resolution tithe maps covering the whole of Wales, alongside the accompanying apportionment documents.

Find A Will

w **probatesearch.service.gov.uk**

You can trawl through lists of post-1858 wills for England and Wales at this site. When it works, the imperfect 'beta' search function should give you details of the value of the estate, date of death, address and the executors. For a fee you can then order a copy of the original document.



GETTY IMAGES

General Register Office

w **www.gov.uk/research-family-history**

Here you can order copies of birth, marriage and death certificates registered in England and Wales back to July 1837. The website remains clunky, with some leftovers from previous iterations, but there are a couple of useful free indexes to births and deaths. For a fee you can then order either printed or digital images of the certificates.

Old Bailey Online

w **oldbaileyonline.org**

This site offers fully searchable texts from more than 197,752 trials held at London's central criminal court (1674–1913), and celebrated its 20th birthday last year with a full refresh. You can now not only filter results by name, crime or punishment, but also plea and victim's occupation.

The Gazette

w **thegazette.co.uk**

The *Gazette* is the official record of the UK government, and has published a host of statutory notices since it was first issued as the *Oxford Gazette* in 1665. Users can explore digitised back issues by date, or search for records of commissions in the Armed Forces, awards of honours and military medals, probate notices and lists of bankrupts, in addition to civil awards.

The Central Database Of Shoah Victims' Names

w **https://collections.yadvashem.org/en/names**

Jerusalem's Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Center, has a database with references to over 4.9 million of the six million Jews murdered by the Nazis and their accomplices. You can search by birth or death year, and may find photos and further biographical details.

LITTLE GEMS

Military

If your ancestor fought in the armed forces, these sites might help you research their service

Anglo Boer War

w **angloboerwar.com**

This labour of love has more than 753,000 soldiers' records as well as a buzzing forum, and covers not just the Second Boer War (1899–1902) but other South African conflicts too.

Bomber Command Losses

w **tinyurl.com/ibcc-losses-database**

The International Bomber Command Centre Losses Database records the details of 58,438 BC deaths from 1936–1968, often with biographical information and photographs.

Great War West Sussex 1914–18

w **tinyurl.com/west-suss-gwws**

The First World War centenaries produced a wealth of free-to-view data. This web page from West Sussex County Council has a link to an index of 14,000 individuals mentioned in newspapers.

National Archives Of Australia

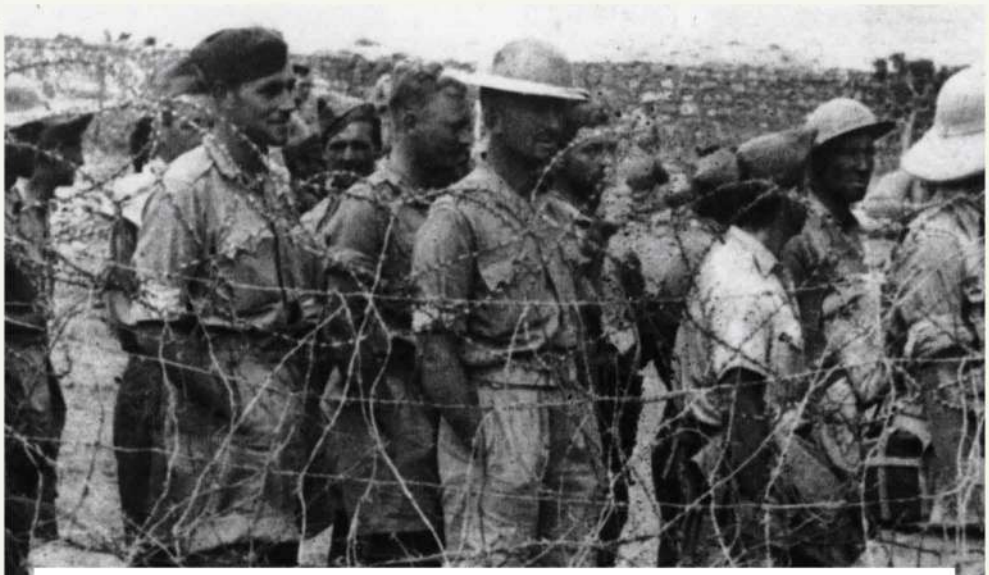
w **tinyurl.com/naa-war-records**

The national repository has been overseeing the mass digitisation of Second World War records, including army records, navy service cards and air-force personnel files.

The Ogilby Muster

w **theogilbymuster.com**

Here you can access material from regimental museums across the UK. You can search and preview images for free, which may provide the information you need, then buy larger versions.



The National Archives (TNA)

w **discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk**

Many of the most important sources at TNA are available via commercial partners, but there are plenty of free resources on its website, including over nine million digital downloads. Collections include WW1 nursing records, naturalisation papers and RAF combat reports. Free digitised microfilms can also be downloaded from **tinyurl.com/tna-guide-free-dig**. There are also many datasets that you can explore. For example, in 2023 volunteers completed a project to catalogue records of more than 200,000 WW2 prisoners of war, making the collection searchable by name.

Internet Archive

w **archive.org**

As well as a vast digital library, this website has, via its Wayback Machine, more than 866 billion pages archived from current and defunct websites. So it can help you find genealogical databases that are no longer online.

National Archives of Ireland

w **nationalarchives.ie**

NAI offers free online access to wills, census records and tithe-applotment books. Also the Virtual Treasury (**virtualtreasury.ie**) is a digital facsimile of the Public Record Office of Ireland, which was destroyed in 1922 *(pictured)*, including many of its holdings.

Digital Panopticon

w **digitalpanopticon.org**

You can search millions of records covering London convicts in Britain and Australia (1780–1925) at this website.

Protestation Returns

w **tinyurl.com/parl-arch-protestation**

In 1642 the House of Commons required every adult male to swear allegiance to the Protestant religion. Here you can search and view digitised pages from the surviving returns, a useful early 'census'.

GENUKI

w **genuki.org.uk**

Maintained by an army of volunteers, this site is packed with information about what records are available for the UK and Ireland, and where you can find them.

LITTLE GEMS

Specialist

From psychiatric patients to seafarers, railway workers, miners and British Indians

Crew List Index Project

w **crewlist.org.uk**

CLIP has data on British merchant seafarers compiled from disparate records. There are also more than 750,000 names in the database Crew Lists of the British Merchant Navy – 1915: **1915 crewlists.rmg.co.uk**.

Families In British India Society

w **tinyurl.com/fibis-arch-data**

This database has over two million records derived from ecclesiastical returns, newspapers, censuses, military lists, shipping records, memorial inscriptions and civil-service records.

Railway Work, Life And Death

w **railwayaccidents.port.ac.uk**

This site has details of accidents on Britain and Ireland's railways from the later 19th century until the Second World War.

The Coalmining History Resource Centre

w **cmhrc.co.uk**

Some of the material on this site is no longer free, but it's worth a visit for accident and fatality reports, and regional reports from an 1842 royal commission.

Wellcome Collection

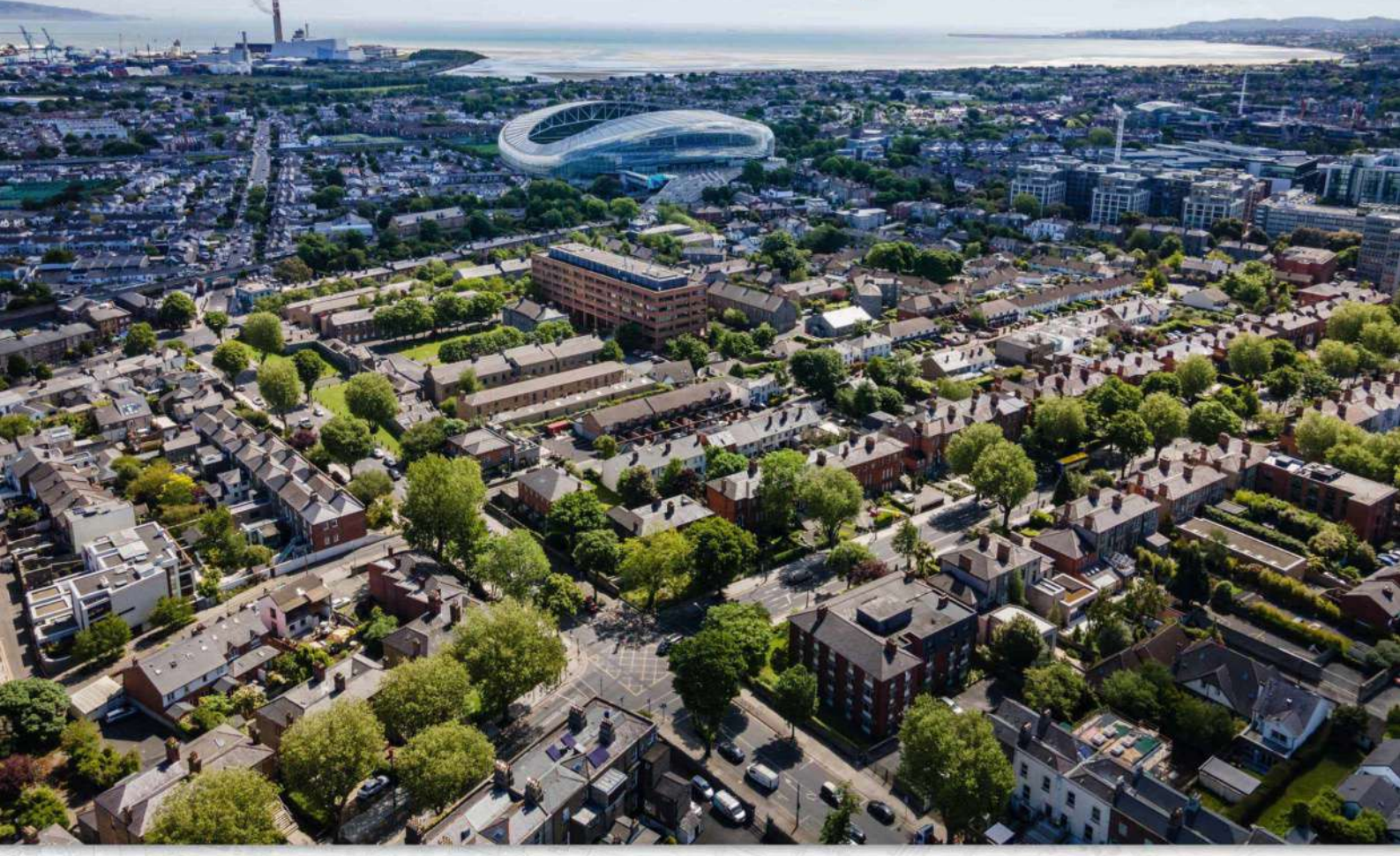
w **wellcomecollection.org/works/kthm97y5**

Free material digitised by the Wellcome Trust include case notes from historic psychiatric hospitals, such as Gartnavel Royal Hospital in Glasgow. You should also try the Historic Hospital Admission Records Project (**hharp.org**).

GETTY IMAGES

48hrs IN DUBLIN

Nicola Morris, the Dublin-based Irish specialist on *Who Do You Think You Are?*, shares the secrets of getting the most out of a two-day research trip to the city



GETTY IMAGES

The majority of Irish genealogical resources for all counties can be found in libraries and archives in Dublin. Although a significant volume of these records are available online, there are still plenty of sources, and expertise, that can only be accessed in person. Why not add an extra day or two to a rugby weekend, make the most of cheap flights or even 'rail and sail' and progress your family history research with a trip to Dublin?

Dublin is a small city with relevant archives and libraries found in all four corners of the town, with excellent public transport in the form of buses and trams. But walking between repositories is an ideal way to see the best bits of the historic city – and at the end of a long day in a dusty archive, there are a wealth of options for whatever your choice of refreshment.

Most of the repositories in Dublin, including the National Archives of Ireland (NAI; **nationalarchives.ie**), are only open Monday to Friday, although the National Library of Ireland (NLI; **nli.ie**) is additionally open on Tuesday and Wednesday evening, plus Saturday morning twice a month. If you arrive in the city early on a Friday or stay late on a Monday then you can still incorporate a day of research into a long weekend.

To avoid any disappointment and delays during your visit, you'll need to do a bit of preparation – see the tips in the box on the right.

BEFORE YOU GO

- ☐ Apply online for NLI and NAI reader's tickets. Check the ID documentation required for both.
- ☐ Where an appointment is required book online.
- ☐ Identify call numbers from online catalogues and collection lists.
- ☐ You must order NLI material in advance using an online form. Also the NLI and NAI store some items off-site, which have to be ordered 2–10 days in advance.

DAY ONE

Prioritise the vast range of resources held by the NAI, NLI and the Valuation Office on your first day in the city

MORNING

Start your day at the NAI on Bishop Street and take advantage of the free genealogy advisory service, available Monday to Friday 10am–1pm and 2pm–5pm. Professional accredited genealogists are on duty to advise and assist you with your family history research and will direct you to the relevant repositories, with hand-out maps and lists of online resources.

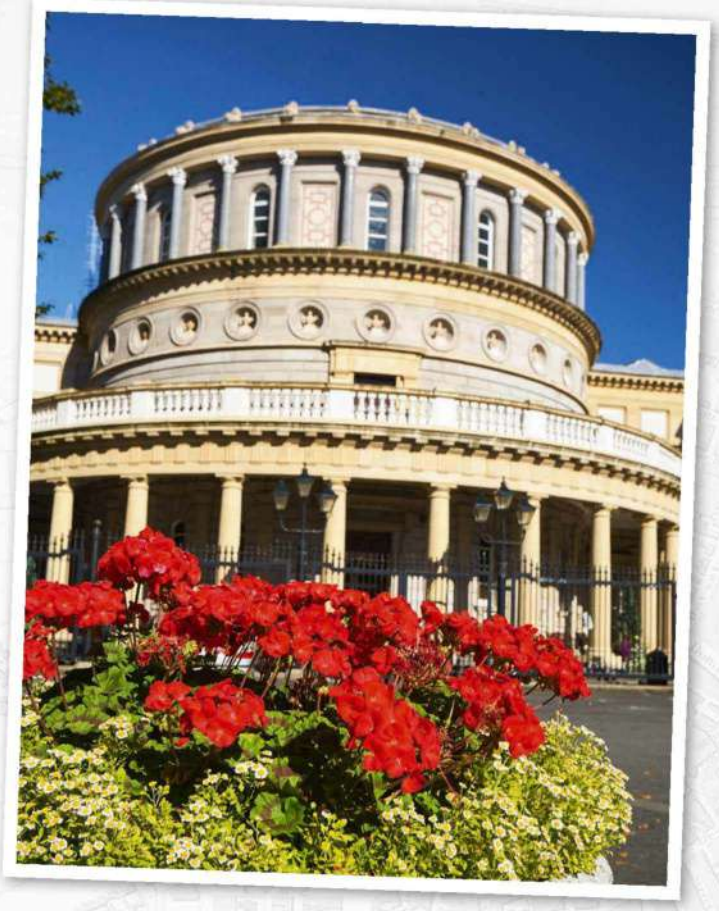
If you have already identified manuscripts in the NAI, get your order in quick to maximise your first three research hours of the day. Except for Mondays the building, frustratingly, closes for lunch between 1pm and 2pm. With permission, you can photograph all records.

If you have the time then coffee and a toasted sandwich at Network Café on Aungier Street will restore you for the stroll through leafy St Stephen's Green to reach the NLI on Kildare Street.

MIDDAY

The NLI's ticket office closes between 12.30pm and 2pm, and you cannot access any reading rooms without your reader's ticket. Arrive early, or stop for lunch en route. You will get a pretty solid tea and sandwich at Buswells Hotel across the street, or the genealogists' favourite, Brewbaker Café on Frederick Street. If you miss the ticket office, there is an enchanting free exhibition on the poet WB Yeats in the library's basement until summer 2025, while opposite the NLI you will find the National Museum of Ireland's Archaeology building (**museum.ie/en-IE/Museums/Archaeology**, free, closed on Monday morning), with a permanent exhibition 'Kingship and Sacrifice' focused on 'bog bodies'.

The NLI has a genealogy room with free access to subscription genealogy websites, free worksheets and expert staff to offer research advice. The NLI is open from 9.30am until 7pm on Tuesday and Wednesday, but otherwise closes at 5pm. You can photograph research material with permission.



The main building of the National Library of Ireland is located on Kildare Street, and an unmissable destination for any family historian paying a visit to Dublin

AFTERNOON

If you don't plan to spend the whole day at the NLI, a visit to the Valuation Office Tailte Éireann (**tailte.ie/en**), whose records have yet to make it online, is a must. Heading north from the NLI skirt around the walls of Trinity College Dublin, or just walk through the campus, towards the River Liffey. Cross to the north side for the Valuation Office, housed in the Irish Life Centre on Abbey Street. While appointments are usually required, you will be accommodated without one, if there is space.

The Valuation Office Revision Books, available on computer terminals, are updated copies of Griffith's Valuation used to trace the occupancy or ownership of a house or land between the 1850s and the 1970s. Find out when your family left or when property passed from one generation to the next, indicating an approximate year of death or emigration. You can then connect a family found in the census back to earlier generations on the same land. Note that these books relate to the Republic of Ireland only. You can photograph the image on screen or print for €1 per page. Before you arrive organise the address information for the property by identifying the townland (or street), the District Electoral Division (DED), the civil parish and county using the Placenames Database of Ireland (**logainm.ie/en/**).

EVENING

There is not much to keep you on Abbey Street after hours, unless you have tickets for the Abbey Theatre. You may want to take a peek at Wynn's Hotel, home to many secret meetings of Republicans during the revolutionary period, or, in the other direction, the Famine Memorial and James Gandon's impressive 18th-century Custom House on the quays. Although last entry is at 5pm, the nearby EPIC: the Irish Emigration Museum (**epicchq.com**) is a popular attraction.

ADVANCED OPTIONS

MORNING

While the NLI, Ireland's copyright library, holds the largest collection of Irish newspapers, local-history books and journals, rent rolls in estate papers, pedigrees in the genealogical office and other manuscript collections, there are also specialised collections in small repositories. The archive of the Royal College of Physicians (**rcpi.ie**), also on Kildare Street, documents medical professionals, and the Royal Irish Academy on nearby Dawson Street (**ria.ie**) houses an extensive collection, including manuscripts documenting Ireland's Gaelic families. Both repositories require an appointment.

AFTERNOON

From the NLI on Kildare Street, the 46A bus will take you out to University College Dublin (**ucd.ie**). Here you can apply, in advance, to access manuscripts in the Special Collections, but also search, by appointment, the archives of the National Folklore Commission for kin involved in the revival of the Irish language, or who lived in an area where a collector gathered local lore and folk tales.

GETTY IMAGES

DAY TWO

The Registry of Deeds, the RCBL, Dublin Castle and a brilliant museum are possibilities for your second day

MORNING

If you have ancestors who belonged to the Church of Ireland, the Representative Church Body Library (RCBL; **ireland.anglican.org/about/rcb-library**) in Churchtown, Dublin 14, has the largest collection of Church of Ireland parish registers, most of which are not yet available online (although not all survive). Take the 14 bus from Dublin City to Braemor Park. An appointment is required, and you can submit a list of registers you wish to inspect. For call numbers, the collection lists can be found on its website and the staff are supremely helpful. Unless you have a large amount of material to search through, arrive when the library opens at 10am, so that you can leave when it closes for lunch at 12.30pm.

Microfilm copies of some registers are also available in the NAI; see the 'Church Records' section of the website Irish Ancestors (**johngrenham.com**) to establish the relevant repository.

MIDDAY

From Churchtown you should have plenty of time to make your way back into the city and stop for lunch at the bottom of South Great George's Street, where you'll be spoilt for options for food and sightseeing.

Uphill along Dame Street is Dublin Castle (**dublincastle.ie**), home of the British administration in Ireland, the medieval Bermingham Tower, Ireland's state paper and record office for two centuries, the Chester Beatty Library (**chesterbeatty.ie**), and, of course, a café.

The RCBL has the largest collection of Church of Ireland parish registers

The courtyard of Dublin Castle on Dame Street, the headquarters of the British government's administration in Ireland until the country's partition in 1922

GETTY IMAGES

AFTERNOON

From Dublin Castle you can walk down Parliament Street and cross the Liffey by Grattan Bridge. Head north along Capel Street to Dorset Street, then turn right and take the second left down Henrietta Street. The entrance to the Registry of Deeds (**tailte.ie/en/registration/registry-of-deeds**) is on the left once you pass through the archway at the top of the street. Most of the memorials and indexes for the Registry of Deeds, which date from 1708, can be viewed online at FamilySearch (**familysearch.org**), although not indexed. However, the repository is still worth a visit, not least for the views across the city from the reading room, and the Dickensian ledgers propped up on sloping desks. An appointment is required, and you must preorder some indexes and transcript books. The indexes are often more navigable in person as opposed to working with online images. Appointments are short, so arrive on time. The staff are very helpful, and you can photograph the material.

EVENING

If you finish early you could book a ticket for a guided tour of 14 Henrietta Street (**14henriettastreet.ie**), which tells the story of over 300 years of family and city life; the museum closes at 6pm on Thursday (4pm on other days). There is not much else to stay for in this area, so wend your way back to Capel Street for a drink. BAR 1661 on Green Street is a gorgeous cocktail bar and pub with food, and outdoor seating on a quiet road. There are plenty of other pubs on Capel Street and as you make your way over the river into Temple Bar, the tourist hotspot of the city.

ADVANCED OPTIONS

MORNING

There are a few items of genealogical interest, particularly for landed families in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, that might be found in the collections in Marsh's Library (**marshlibrary.ie**) on St Patrick's Close beside St Patrick's Cathedral, a short walk from the NAI. This beautiful library is open until 5pm Tuesday to Saturday.

AFTERNOON

The new state-of-the-art Irish Military Archive (**militaryarchives.ie/home**) is at Cathal Brugha Barracks in Rathmines Dublin 6, which can also be reached by the 14 bus. Much of its collection is online, but if you are researching the revolutionary period or personnel in the Free State or Irish Army, this archive is worth interrogating.

Correspond with the archivist in advance, and an appointment is required. Note that the site is an active barracks, so don't go wandering around or photograph any of the buildings.

NICOLA MORRIS is a professional genealogist based in Dublin, director of Timeline Research (**timeline.ie**) and a long-time researcher for *Who Do You Think You Are?* who has appeared on screen in many episodes

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WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?

'I've Discovered Our Haitian Roots'

CELEBRATING YOUR DISCOVERIES

Philippa Larard found genealogy the perfect antidote to stress while nursing during the Covid-19 pandemic. She has uncovered links to ancestors in the Caribbean, Prussia and Spain, says **Gail Dixon**

My mum Felicity used to say that we had a family connection to Haiti, although she thought it was just a rumour," says Philippa Larard. "We were also told that my great great grandfather was the Prussian consul in Haiti during the 19th century."

Philippa lives in Lyndhurst in Hampshire, and works as an advanced nurse practitioner at an inner-city doctor's surgery. Naturally, she faced great challenges during the Covid-19 pandemic. "We were all working long hours, and the stress among patients was tangible. I was giving first-round immunisations to people who were frightened to leave the house. To escape the pressure of my job, I needed something to immerse myself in fully. Tracing our family history proved the perfect distraction."

I was giving first-round immunisations to people frightened to leave the house

Philippa's parents Felicity and John Larard with Felicity's mother Clara Nell née Berger

Philippa's mum Felicity Nell married John Larard in Kensington, Central London, in 1958. "Mum became obsessed with genealogy in the 1980s, and spent many hours tracing our Nell and Larard ancestry. However, she didn't research the family of her mum, my lovely grandmother Clara Berger, who was born in Málaga, southern Spain, in 1911.

"Clara came to Britain in around 1931 to learn English and met my very British grandfather Mervyn Nell, who was apparently smitten. They married at Christ Church in Gloucester, in 1932.

"Clara didn't discuss her ancestry because, sadly, she felt that being a 'foreigner' of mixed race wasn't something to be proud of. She spoke several languages but the Nells discouraged her from speaking anything but English, especially during wartime.

"I remember Clara as a vivacious and fun person. I met her mother, my great grandmother Jeanette, when she visited from Spain. She didn't speak a word of English but we used to laugh a lot, too."

Jeanette Berger (née Duparque) was born in Liège, Belgium, in 1884, and her father Louis was jeweller to the Belgian royal family. "Some of his jewellery has been passed down to me, and it's very intricate and ornate."

Jeanette married Alfred Berger in Madrid in 1905, although why she ventured to Spain is a mystery to Philippa. Alfred was a wine merchant who travelled between Málaga and Bremen, Germany, several times during the early 20th century. He appears on passenger lists at Ancestry (**ancestry.co.uk**), as do Jeanette and Clara.

"I was told that Alfred moved to Málaga to learn about the wine business and set up his own company." His life story would be the gateway to astonishing revelations for Philippa.

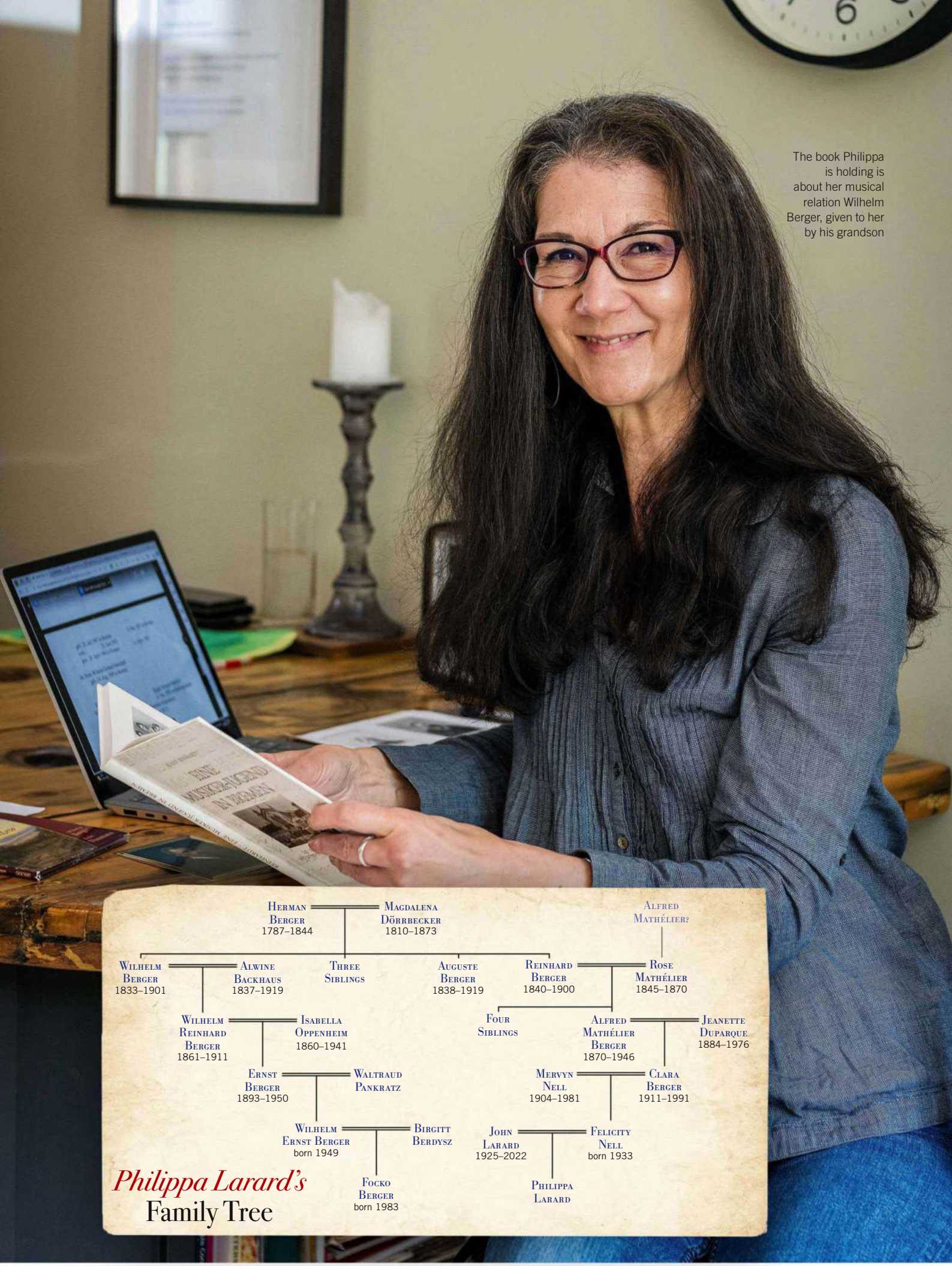
Haitian Link

"I searched for Alfred's birth record and was thrilled to discover that he was born in Gonaïves, northern Haiti, in 1870. The family myth about the Caribbean connection was true."

Alfred's birth was included in the collection 'Haiti, Civil Registration, 1794–2012' at FamilySearch (**bit.ly/fs-haiti-reg**). "The records were in French, which I don't speak, so I've had to have them translated."

Philippa was intrigued to discover that Alfred was a triplet, and that he had older twin sisters who were also listed at FamilySearch. "This reminded ▶

UNP/JAMES NEWELL



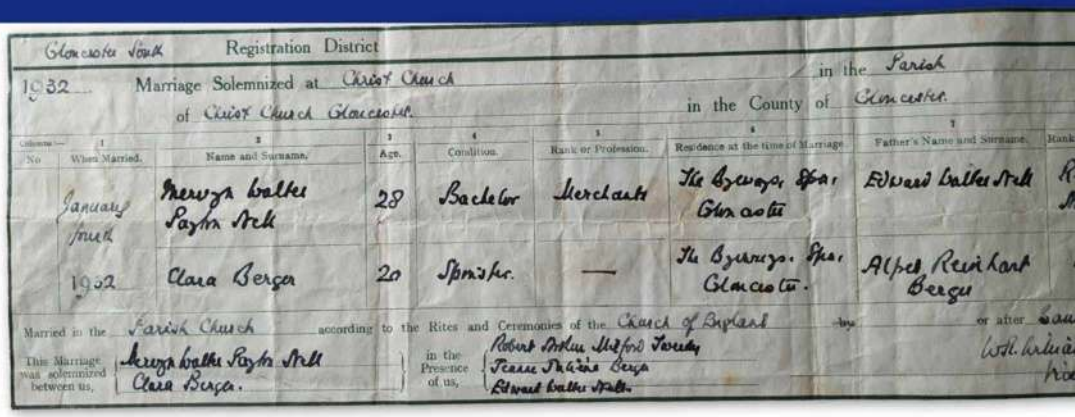
The book Philippa is holding is about her musical relation Wilhelm Berger, given to her by his grandson

Philippa Larard's Family Tree

me of when I was pregnant with my daughter Rosi and Mum said, 'The triplets and twins haven't come out yet.' She was thinking of her grandfather Alfred and his siblings. That was the first time I'd heard of multiple births in the family and I said, 'Oh, great, thanks for that!' "

Alfred, and his brothers Wilhelm and Reinhard, were born 11 months after their twin sisters Magdalene and Rose. Their parents were Reinhard Berger and his wife Rose Mathélier, Philippa's great great grandparents.

This raised the question, what was Reinhard Berger doing in Haiti? A newspaper report that Rosi found online revealed the answer.


Gloucester South Registration District
1932 Marriage Solemnized at Christ Church in the Parish
of Christ Church Gloucester in the County of Gloucester

No.	When Married	Name and Surname	Age	Condition	Rank or Profession	Residence at the time of Marriage	Father's Name and Surname
	January fourth	Mervyn Walter Payton Nell	28	Bachelor	Merchants	The Byeways, Spa, Gloucester	Edward Walter Nell
	1932	Clara Berger	20	Spinster	—	The Byeways, Spa, Gloucester	Alfred Reinhart Berger

Married in the Parish Church according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Church of England by or after
This Marriage was solemnized between us, Mervyn Walter Payton Nell, Clara Berger. in the Presence of us, Robert Arthur Milford Tweedy, Jeanne Julienne Berger, Edward Walter Nell.

Philippa's maternal grandparents got married in 1932

Consul Connection

On 13 November 1867, the journal of the Haitian Republic *Le Moniteur* reported the arrival of the Prussian consul to Haiti, Reinhard Berger, who would take up residence in Gonaïves. Another of Felicity's family rumours turned out to be true.

Prussia was a powerful European state in the 19th century, and had trade links with Haiti. A consul was a diplomat who focused on supporting the commercial interests of home citizens overseas.

Tracing ancestors from Germany prior to its unification in 1871 can be challenging, because the first national German census wasn't taken until 1875. Before that, records were compiled at city, kingdom, duchy or provincial level.

"Reinhard was born in 1840 in the state of Bremen, which became part of the German Empire. I've yet to discover how he managed to rise to become a consul. His father Herman worked as a merchant in Mulheim, a city in western Germany."

I discovered that I have a tiny genetic link to Togo and Mali in West Africa

Philippa believes that Reinhard and Rose married in Gonaïves in 1869, although she is still searching for the marriage record.

"It's challenging to research Haitian ancestors, because of the political and social instability there. I'd love to visit, but that's just not possible currently.

"I'd also love to discover how Reinhard and Rose met. Mum thought that she was a maid, but perhaps she was the daughter of the French consul to Haiti, given her surname. I'm researching other consulates in the country, to see if there was any connection to the Mathéliers.

Philippa's great great grandfather Reinhard Berger *(left)* and his son Alfred, her great grandfather

DNA Discovery

"I took an AncestryDNA test, and discovered that I have a tiny genetic link to Togo and Mali in West Africa. Rose must have been of African descent, so tragically her ancestors were probably enslaved.

"I think that Clara didn't share information about the ethnicity of her grandmother Rose because the Nell family would have disapproved. I find this particularly sad, because

Philippa's great grandfather Alfred Berger had four siblings, including twin sisters Rose and Magdalene

I feel immensely proud of my mixed-race ancestry. How times have changed for the better."

Rose Mathélier's story was a deeply tragic one, as Philippa discovered. "I found a registration certificate which revealed that Rose died a day after giving birth to the triplets.

"To have triplets in Haiti during the mid-19th century must have been very unusual, and high risk to mother and babies. Two of the boys, Alfred and Wilhelm, survived, and little Reinhard died a year later. It would mean so much to discover more about Rose's short life, and to find out where she's buried.

"I'm also keen to find out more about Rose's parents, and if she had any siblings. They seem to have been denied, just like my grandmother Clara had to deny her ancestors when she came to live in Britain. The triplets' registration was signed by a man named Alfred Mathélier – could this have been Rose's father?"

In the 1870s, Reinhard Berger moved his young family back to Bremen, and the children were raised by his unmarried sister August Berger. Alfred grew up there before entering the wine business in Spain.

Philippa managed to find Alfred's gravestone in Málaga listed online at Find A Grave (**findagrave.com**), and this reinforced her findings. His full name was given as Alfred Mathélier Berger, and he passed away in 1946.

A Note-Perfect Romance

The Bergers were a distinctly globetrotting family. Philippa discovered that Reinhard's brother Wilhelm moved from Bremen to the USA where he became a music dealer in Boston, Massachusetts. Wilhelm married Alwine Backhaus, a pianist from Cincinnati, Ohio.

Philippa was delighted to discover that their son, also called Wilhelm, became a famous classical composer. "He was born in Boston in 1861, and the family returned to Bremen a year later. By the age of 14, Wilhelm had composed various songs, and works for the piano. In 1888, he married Isabella Oppenheim, who was also a talented pianist. Isabella was Jewish, which led to very difficult times for some of their descendants in Nazi Germany.

"Wilhelm was very prolific and wrote amazing pieces of music, some of which remind me of the work of Brahms. He was also a court pianist in Germany.

"I found an article about him on the website of the Bremen newspaper *Weser-Kurier (***weser-kurier.de***)*. This included a picture of his grandson, also called Wilhelm Berger, and some quotes. I emailed the journalist, and he forwarded my details to Wilhelm.

"He got in touch, and has been my email pen pal ever since. Wilhelm has no idea how much he helped me through the worst of Covid-19. He, too, is interested in genealogy, and has shared information with me about his German ancestors. Wilhelm is my light, and I feel so fortunate to have found him."

Felicity and Clara knew very little about the German side of their family. Philippa wonders if the distance that emerged between her British and German relatives was caused by growing political tensions and the world wars.

"It was astonishing to discover that Wilhelm's son, Focko, lives in Reading, which is about an hour's drive from my home. I was delighted to meet them both in 2023, and it meant so much to be able to tell Wilhelm how he helped me in the pandemic.

"Genealogy still helps me manage the stress of being a nurse. You become immersed in it, and it's impossible to think about anything else.

"It feels good to celebrate our international ancestry, which was suppressed for so long. The German, African and Haitian connections in the family are particularly special to me. We're like the United Nations!"

Resources

These websites helped Philippa uncover her maternal line

FamilySearch

w **bit.ly/fs-haiti-reg**

You can explore civil records of births, marriages and deaths in Haiti (1794–2012) online at FamilySearch. The collection provided Philippa with a major breakthrough, but note that the records are in French – one of the country's official languages.

Find A Grave

w **findagrave.com**

Philippa located her great grandfather Alfred Berger's memorial at Find A Grave. He was buried in Spain, and the stone included his mother's maiden name (Mathélier), which is common practice there.

National Library of France

w **tinyurl.com/bnf-moniteur**

The digital resources available on the library's website include an incomplete collection of issues of the Haitian newspaper *Le Moniteur* published between 1845 and 1872. Via a link on Wikipedia (**wikipedia.org**), Philippa's daughter Rosi found an article that mentions the arrival of Philippa's ancestor Reinhard Berger on Haiti.

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Share your family story with us and you could appear in the magazine!

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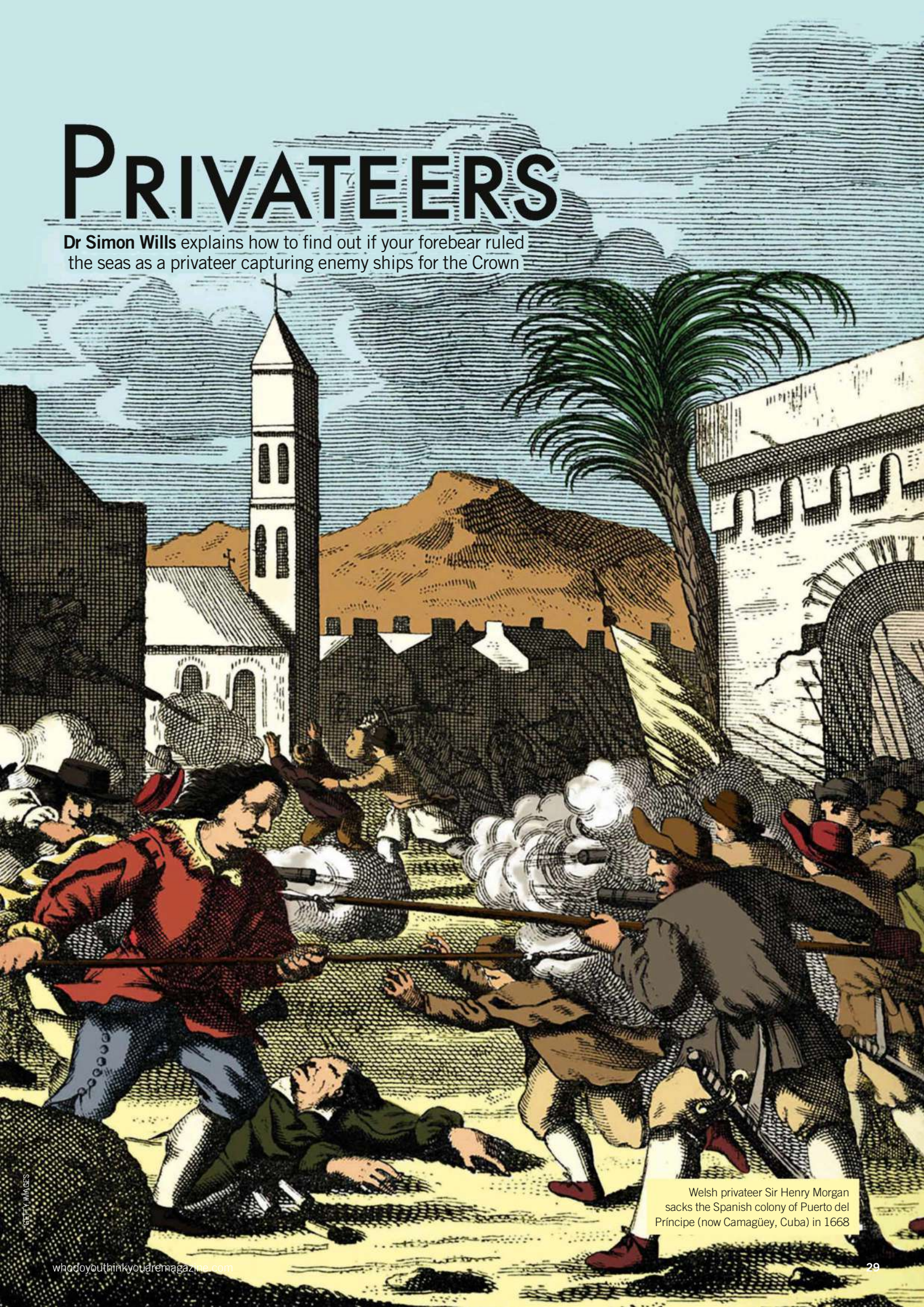
PRIVATEERS

Dr Simon Wills explains how to find out if your forebear ruled the seas as a privateer capturing enemy ships for the Crown



Welsh privateer Sir Henry Morgan sacks the Spanish colony of Puerto del Príncipe (now Camagüey, Cuba) in 1668

GETTY IMAGES

Privateers and pirates are sometimes assumed to be the same, but this is not correct. Pirates were highwaymen of the high seas who operated entirely outside the law. They attacked vessels of all nations indiscriminately during wartime or peace – including British ships – plundering cargos, capturing ships to add to their fleet, pillaging coastal settlements, murdering and raping. Privateers, on the other hand, were legal businesses a bit like a privately owned navy. Each 'private ship of war' could only operate against a nation with which Britain was at war, and captured their ships and cargos for profit. It was a dangerous trade, but potentially highly lucrative as well.

Many former privateers are notable persons in history such as Francis Drake, the explorer Martin Frobisher, the founder of Bermuda George Somers and Walter Raleigh. Most privateers operated within the legal boundaries set for them. Yet sometimes the distinction between privateer and pirate could become confused. Sir Henry Morgan, for example, was originally a privateer even though his career was as outrageous and bloodthirsty as any pirate. Yet his actions suited the political objectives of the Government, so he was rewarded with a knighthood and the governorship of Jamaica. Similarly, Peter Easton started out as a privateer but became an infamous Elizabethan pirate; his fleet was so powerful that no nation could overthrow him. As a result he was able to retire in comfort.

Scottish privateer William Kidd welcomes a young woman on board his ship in New York Harbor, 1696

Legitimate privateers were useful to Britain's war effort: they harried the enemy, robbing them of supplies and ships, and generating income for the Crown. Following a conversation with John Belasyse, 1st Baron Belasyse in 1667, Samuel Pepys, who was chief secretary to the Admiralty, wrote in his diaries, "We have done the Spaniard abundance of mischief in the West Indies by our privateers at Jamaica, which they lament mightily."

Finding An Ancestor

Nearly all of the documents required to identify a privateering forebear and follow their career are ▶

Sir Christopher Myngs c1625–1666

There was a thin line between a pirate and a privateer

Privateers have always been controversial, none more so than Christopher Myngs. He joined the Royal Navy as a ship's boy in the 1630s, but rose rapidly to become a senior officer who distinguished himself several times in wars against the Dutch.

He was dispatched to the Caribbean as a privateer with authority to attack the Spanish and operated mainly from Jamaica, capturing ships and raiding their colonies.

Myngs earned a reputation for savagery that led even the British governor of Jamaica to doubt his sanity, calling him "unhinged". In contrast, his friend the diarist Samuel Pepys described him as a "very witty well-spoken fellow".

However, what Britain saw as legitimate privateering, Spain viewed as common piracy and murder – claims they had levelled at many other British privateers including Francis Drake.

Myngs' success meant that the British authorities would have been content to leave him alone, but unfortunately he didn't help himself. He was supposed to surrender all booty to the Crown via the governor of Jamaica, but instead he allocated it to himself, his crews and his cronies as he saw fit.

Since he was now in breach of privateering law, the British imprisoned Myngs, but soon realised what a valuable asset he had been in the wars against Spain. He was released and the British, after asking him to be more discreet, turned a blind eye to his future excesses.

Perhaps appropriately, the privateer's end was a violent one. In 1666, in a naval battle against the Dutch, Myngs was picked out on the deck of his ship by an enemy marksman. Shot in the face, he died of his wounds shortly afterwards.

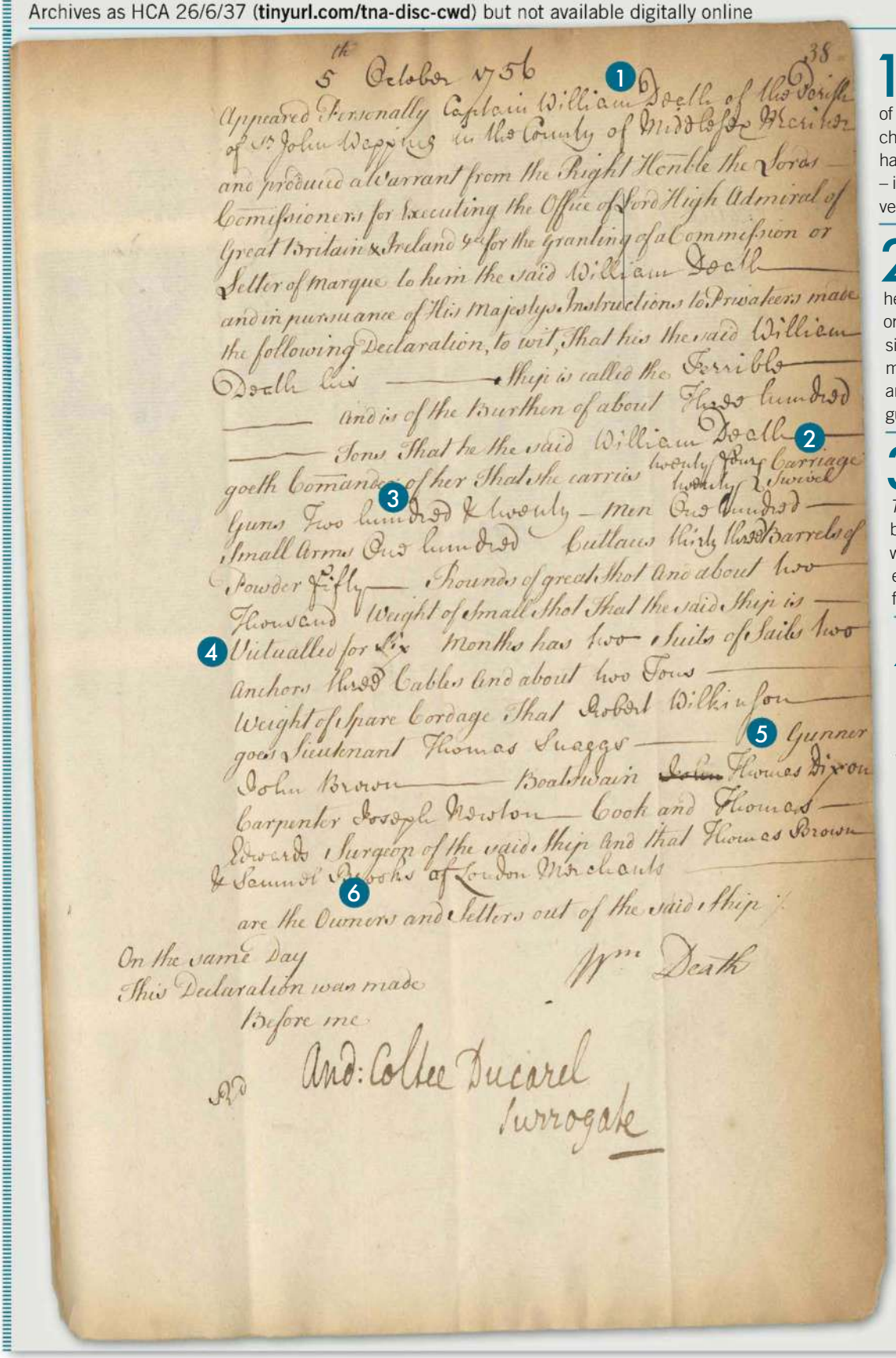
DID YOU KNOW?

Business people might fit out a privateer as an investment, and will be named in the privateer's declaration. Diarist Samuel Pepys jointly owned one: the *Flying Greyhound*.

GETTY IMAGES

Letter Of Marque, 1756

This letter of marque against France for Commander William Death of the *Terrible* is held by The National Archives as HCA 26/6/37 (**tinyurl.com/tna-disc-cwd**) but not available digitally online



THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

1 William Death
The name and address of the officer who was in charge of the privateer and had overall responsibility – ie the commander of the vessel – is recorded here.

2 Carriage Guns
Privateers were more heavily armed than naval or merchant ships of similar size, and carried multiple types of heavy armament: here carriage guns and swivel guns.

3 Two Hundred & Twenty Men
Terrible was a small ship, but the large crew of 220 was needed to overpower enemy crews by sheer force of numbers.

4 Victualles
A ship had to have enough food (victuals), spare sails and rope to last out its commission.

5 Officers
The gunner was in charge of armaments, the boatswain enforced discipline, and the carpenter was responsible for repairing privateers and their prizes after each action.

6 Owners
Investigating the owners may reveal family relationships between them and the commander, or the source of funding for the ship.

kept at The National Archives in Kew (TNA; **nationalarchives.gov.uk**). However, unfortunately there is no online TNA research guide for this subject.

In order to be recognised as a legitimate privateer, the owners of each ship had to complete a three-stage legal process. They had firstly to provide a financial indemnity statement called a bail or bond; secondly, a declaration that the ship was fully prepared for war; and thirdly they were issued with a letter of marque authorising the ship to attack the enemy.

All of these processes were overseen by the Admiralty's legal arm, so are found in TNA series beginning with the letters 'HCA' for High Court of Admiralty; see the description in TNA's catalogue Discovery at **discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C142**.

The bail or bond is of least value to the genealogist. It was a financial guarantee that the captain of the privateer would not exceed his legal authority, and the owners had to indemnify the Admiralty against this happening. These documents are found in series HCA 25. They date from 1549–1820, and are grouped by year. You must visit TNA to see them, because they haven't been digitised. They name the captain and the ship, but are not indexed by name so you must have an idea of the years to search. However, all of the bonds for privateers acting against the USA in the War of 1812 can be found online at **1812privateers.org**.

Valuable Declarations

Much more useful are the declarations concerning the privateer's readiness for war. These are in series HCA 26 (from 1689 onwards) and name the ship's officers. The captain is usually referred to as the "commander". Other senior personnel who had to be named were the lieutenant or mate (second in command), gunner (in charge of armaments), boatswain (responsible for ship's discipline), carpenter, cook and surgeon (or doctor). The owners are named as well. The total number of crew is specified, but individual seamen are not named. The declaration also gives the ship's tonnage, its armament and often the home port (if not this can often be inferred from the owners' addresses).

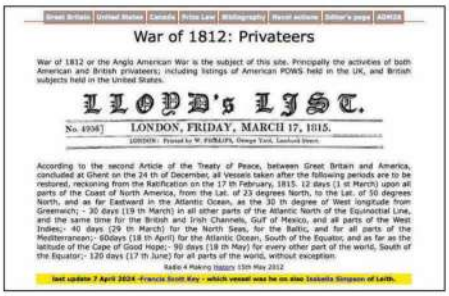
Each volume of declarations at TNA until 1783 has its own index. However, the declarations for 1689–1697, 1744 and 1756–1761 have been transcribed and are available on TNA's website. You can look for a privateering officer by typing his name or that of his ship into Discovery's 'Advanced Search' web page (**discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/advanced-search**) and restricting results to HCA 26, or search the series directly via **tinyurl.com/discovery-dec**.

After providing a financial bond and a declaration, privateers were issued

A captured Spaniard kneels before Sir Henry Morgan as his crew of privateers sack the city of Panama in 1671

Expert Picks

The best websites for researching a privateer in your family tree



1812 Privateers

w **1812privateers.org**

Register entries for letters of marque against France (1793–1815) and the USA (1777–1783) are indexed here by ship and captain's name (click the 'Great Britain' tab).

Books Boxes & Boats

w **maritimearchives.co.uk/lloyds-list.html**

This website has issues of *Lloyd's List*, a daily digest of shipping news including actions of privateers (1741–1826). You can access a partial index at **cityoflondon.gov.uk/lloydslist**.

Discovery

w **tinyurl.com/discovery-dec**

You can search transcriptions of privateers' declarations for 1689–1697, 1744 and 1756–1761 in TNA's series HCA 26 from this page. Just type the name of an officer or ship.

GETTY IMAGES

A typical ship from the Tudor era

with a letter of marque. The registers for these are in ADM 7/317–332 and 649 at TNA (for 1777–1815). They contain less information – typically ship name, commander, tonnage, armament, crew numbers, and the nation the privateer was allowed to operate against. There are separate letters for each nation where permission was granted. Again you must visit TNA to see most of them. However, entries for privateers acting against France in 1793–1815 and the US colonies in 1777–1783 are indexed by ship and captain's name at **1812privateers.org.**

If you can find the name of your relation's ship, you can explore his career. British privateers cruised mainly in the English Channel and the Atlantic/Caribbean. Newspapers are useful for identifying whether your ancestor captured any ships, or was himself captured.

The maritime publication *Lloyd's List* may also be helpful. This daily summary of shipping news has been published since 1741, and you can see complete editions between 1741 and 1826 at the site Books Boxes & Boats (**maritimearchives.co.uk/lloyds-list.html**) although some issues are missing. They often contain brief details of privateer actions against the enemy, and of ships lost and damaged. An example entry from 9 January 1795: "*The Dorset*, Capt Edmonds, from Jamaica to London, was taken off Cape Antonio by the *Liberty*, privateer, and sent for Charleston – the captain killed and two men wounded." Helpfully, there is a partial index to *Lloyd's List* by ship name, captain's name and date at **cityoflondon.gov.uk/lloydslist** compiled from copies held by Guildhall Library.

Enemy ships that were captured by British privateers were called 'prizes', and the legitimacy of the action was evaluated by an Admiralty Prize Court to ensure crews had operated within the law. In successful cases prize ships were handed over to privateer crews and owners, and were said to have been 'condemned'. Court papers are in series HCA 32 at TNA, arranged by date from 1592 to 1855, and often contain a wealth of detail such as eyewitness accounts. The List and Index Society (**listandindexsociety.org.uk**) has indexed 1776–1817 by captured vessel's name (indexes 183, 184 and 194 – TNA has copies).

Once approved by the Prize Court, the captured ship and its cargo was sold and the profits divided up. The owners claimed around half, while the crew shared the rest according to an established formula. Typically the captain took about 12 shares, his lieutenant 6, the boatswain 3, able seamen 1, and ship's boys half a share. This could be very lucrative, and crews were sometimes not paid a wage because the expectation of income from captured prizes was so high.

Privateers ceased to operate in 1815 after Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo, and in 1857 were made illegal.

Enemy ships that were captured by British privateers were called 'prizes'

TOP TIP!

You may discover a privateer in your tree from their will. TNA's Prerogative Court of Canterbury wills include 325 men described as privateers (**tinyurl.com/tna-wills**).

GETTY IMAGES

RESOURCES

Take your research further

BOOKS

A Voyage Round the World by the Way of the Great South Sea
George Shelvocke
J Senex, 1726
This firsthand account of privateering is available for free through Google Books (**tinyurl.com/ggl-shel**).

Commerce Raiding: Historical Case Studies, 1755–2009
Bruce A Elleman and SCM Paine
US Naval War College, 2013
This report considers privateers in the context of 'commerce raiding', and can be downloaded for free at **tinyurl.com/usnwc-raid**.

Pirates and Privateers in the 18th Century
Mike Rendell
Pen & Sword, 2018
Rendell's account includes case studies of individuals.

Privateering and Piracy in the Colonial Period
John Franklin Jameson (editor)
Macmillan, 1923
This volume of transcribed historical documents related to privateering (1636–1762) is available for free from the Internet Archive (**tinyurl.com/arch-jfj**).

WEBSITE

LLOYD'S REGISTER OF SHIPPING
w **tinyurl.com/hec-lros**
Many privateer ships are described in the register, including their home port, captain and owners.

DR SIMON WILLS is a genealogist with over 35 years' experience, and author of many books including *Shipwrecks in 100 Objects* (Frontline, 2022), *Tracing Your Seafaring Ancestors* (Pen & Sword, 2016) and *How Our Ancestors Died* (Pen & Sword, 2013)

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Accurate, in-depth coverage of the week's biggest record releases and genealogy news

Family History Tutorials
Learn how to master basic skills or take your research further with our genealogy tutorials, packed with top tips and expert advice

Latest Offers
Discover our round-up of new deals and discounts for family historians – helping you save money

Real Stories
Read extraordinary real-life stories that our readers have uncovered while researching their trees

GETTY IMAGES

SIGN UP TODAY BY VISITING

whodoyouthinkyouaremagazine.com

SCROLL DOWN TO FIND OUR 'SIGN ME UP' BOX

A women's cricket team, c1910

Sporting Ancestors

Jonathan Scott rounds up sites for researching different sports and their individual players

The history of sport in Britain seems to have been shaped by class. For much of the 19th and 20th centuries there was a rigid divide between wealthy amateur sports and players, and the professionals. Some sports split along class lines, such as rugby union and rugby league. Others, such as tennis and cricket, had complex social strata, with all sorts of unwritten rules for those who played for fun, those who were paid, and those who were paid but didn't admit it.

When it comes to finding out about a particular competitor, the level at which they played, and the sport itself, are important factors determining how much material is readily available. For example, such is the country's long-lasting passion for football and cricket that you'll find a host of useful databases at your fingertips. Other sports were not so widely documented, and what survives is largely down to luck.

But even if your relation played for a school team or joined a small amateur club, there may still be a record of their exploits in resources such as historic local newspapers.

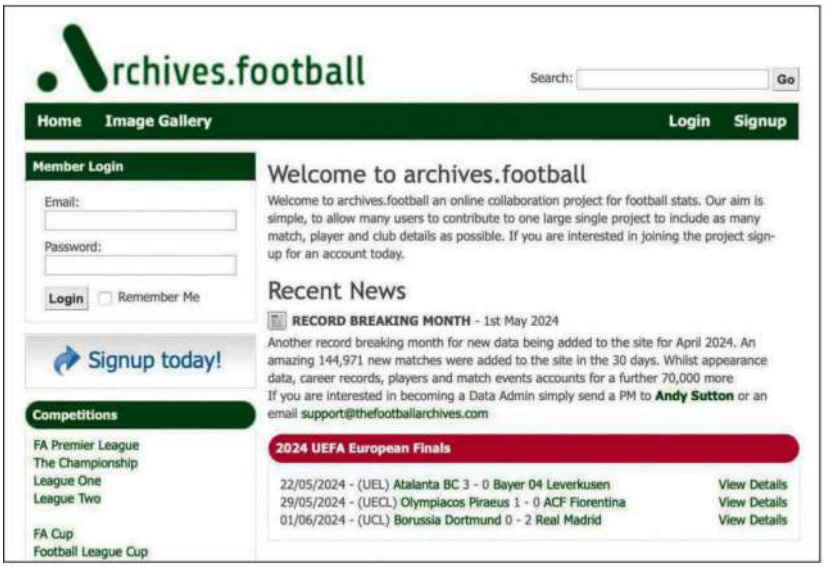
GETTY IMAGES

SPORTING HERITAGE

w **sportingheritage.org.uk**

This website collates details of collections from across the UK, most of them held by museums, sports clubs and archives. Clicking 'Collections' in the menu bar shows you an online map with holdings by location that you can also search by sport, finding details of the likes of yoga's national governing body the British Wheel of Yoga in Sleaford, Lincolnshire, and the British Dragon Boat Racing Association in Caunton, Newark. Alongside these are digital projects and websites such as Our Netball History (**ournetballhistory.org.uk**), which includes photographs, stories and memories. Using Sporting Heritage in conjunction with The National Archives' catalogue (**discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk**) should help you track down what might survive where.

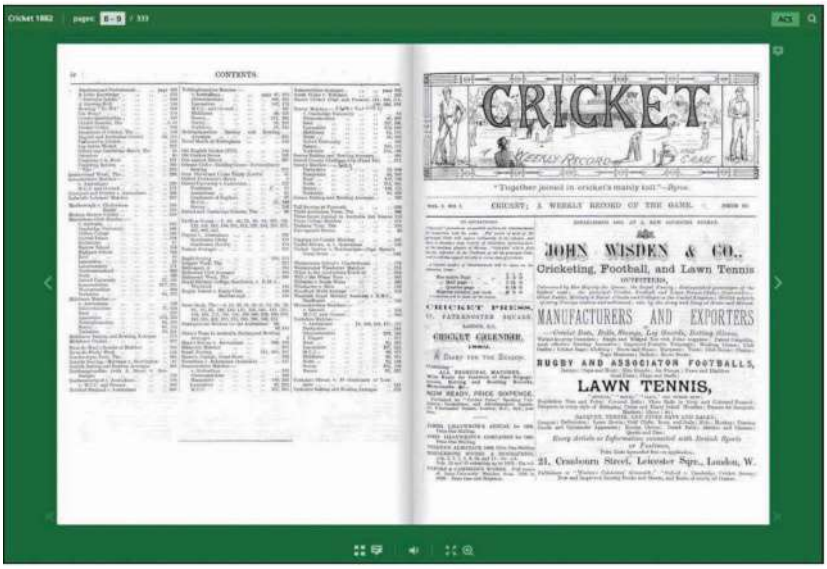
BEST WEBSITES



ARCHIVES.FOOTBALL

w **thefootballarchives.com/network/home.php**

This website has more than 2,532,000 match results, detailing some 432,000 goals, and roughly 346,000 player profiles dating back to the 1880s. Testing the database with my mother's maiden name led to numerous entries, including one Benjamin Warren. His profile includes basic information such as nationality, place and date of birth, date of death and positions played, but to view full career statistics you will have to register – which is free. Doing so revealed that Benjamin played five games for Derby County in the 1902/1903 season. The site also has an image archive that contains thousands of programme covers, headshots and stadiums.



THE ASSOCIATION OF CRICKET STATISTICIANS AND HISTORIANS

w **acscricket.com**

The highlights here include free access to back issues of the weekly magazine *Cricket* (1882–1914). It featured scorecards for first-class matches, as well as for any schools or clubs that paid for their scores to be published. There's also an index to published obituaries (**tinyurl.com/crick-obit**), and an Online Cricket Records section. This is powered by the vast database held by CricketArchive (**cricketarchive.com**); click the name of a player or a particular match to see the relevant page on CricketArchive, although only subscribers can view the data (£4.99 for a month or £49.99 for a year).

EXPERT'S CHOICE

Jean Williams is a professor in sport history and author of *The History of Women's Football* and *Britain's Olympic Women*

The 50th anniversary of the founding of the International Olympic Committee was celebrated in Lausanne in 1944

Since this is an Olympic year, it seems right to draw attention to archives that preserve the history of the Olympic Movement. The British were important to this process, and the Olympic Games can trace their modern origins back to athletic competitions that were held at Much Wenlock in Shropshire. But the modern story was internationalised by Baron Pierre de Coubertin, who co-founded the International Olympic Committee in 1894.

If you want to find out more, the website of the Olympic Studies Centre in Lausanne, Switzerland, is an excellent starting point: **olympics.com/ioc/olympic-studies-centre**. It has sections on the history of the Games, the ancient Games, the Olympic symbol and art collections.

London is the first city to host the Olympics three times (1908, 1948 and 2012), and The National Archives' online research guide shows how that came about politically: **nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/olympic-paralympic-games-sporting-history**.

In addition, the British Olympic Association collection at the University of East London Archives is now searchable via **uel.ac.uk/study/student-life/library-archives-learning-services/archive-collections**. You can also see more detailed catalogue descriptions through Archives Hub (**archiveshub.jisc.ac.uk**) at **tinyurl.com/arch-hub-boa**. Highlights include organisational records, press cuttings and publicity materials, photos, invitations, programmes and tickets. Unfortunately, many of the BOA's records are lost or damaged because its offices were flooded more than once between the late 1980s and the mid-1990s.

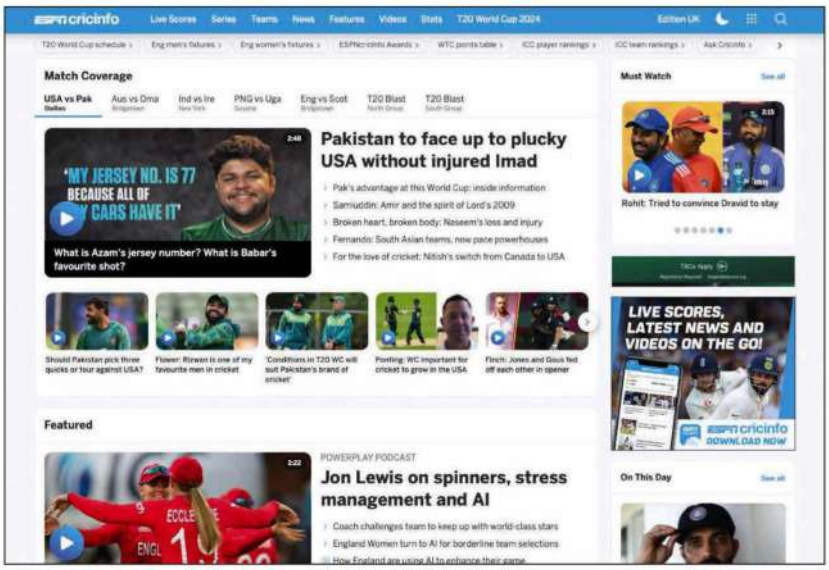
• *For more on the history of the modern Olympic Games and useful resources, see page 52.*

GETTY IMAGES

11v11.COM

w **11v11.com**

The official site of the Association of Football Statisticians is essentially powered by a huge database of records of English and international football, including World Cup games and the Premier League. Testing the 'Quick Search' tool, again with my mother's maiden name, led to numerous entries, including an obscure 1920s Coventry City player named Clement Warren, who scored three goals in his 18 appearances. The level of detail varies, depending on the length of a player's career and the era in which they were active. You can also click through to individual matches that each footballer played in, which should give the date, teams and score.



CRICINFO

w **espncricinfo.com**

CricInfo's homepage contains the latest news and live statistics from cricket matches across the globe. More interesting for family historians is the online archive of the *Wisden Cricketers' Almanack* (1864–2021) at **espncricinfo.com/wisdenalmanack/content/story/almanack/index.html**. The almanac was founded in 1864 by cricketer John Wisden, and has been published annually ever since. You might, for example, come across the playing record of Irish writer Samuel Beckett. He played two first-class games for Dublin University against Northamptonshire in 1925 and 1926, scoring 35 runs in his four innings and conceding 64 runs without taking a wicket.

Go Further

Eight more websites that you can't afford to miss

BRITISH NEWSPAPER ARCHIVE

w **britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk**

Local newspapers often printed results, photos and reports from school matches together with smaller regional leagues.

MCC MUSEUM

w **lords.org/mcc/heritage-collections/what-we-do**

The museum holds records of the Marylebone Cricket Club, as well as material relating to individual cricketers.

MODERN RECORDS CENTRE

w **warwick.ac.uk/services/library/mrc/archives_online/digital/nca/**

The MRC at the University of Warwick holds the National Cycle Archive.

NATIONAL FOOTBALL MUSEUM

w **nationalfootballmuseum.com**

The museum is in Manchester, and has about 2,500 items on display. More than 40,000 items are held at its Research Centre in Preston.

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF SCOTLAND

w **tinyurl.com/nls-coll-sport**

This web page can help you find details of sporting archives in the NLS, including material relating to curling, golf and the Highland Games.

TENNIS ARCHIVES

w **tennisarchives.com**

This labour of love has data on thousands of tennis matches and players' careers.

THE KENT SCHOOLS' FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

w **ksfa.org.uk**

There are all sorts of places where school records might survive. This group came into being in 1921, when 19 member associations competed for the Fletcher Trophy.

UNIVERSITY OF STIRLING ARCHIVES

w **https://libguides.stir.ac.uk/archives**

The University of Stirling preserves the records of Commonwealth Games Scotland, including the 1970 and 1986 Games in Edinburgh.

Angus and Christine McDonald kiss on their wedding day on the Isle of Lewis, 28 May 1955

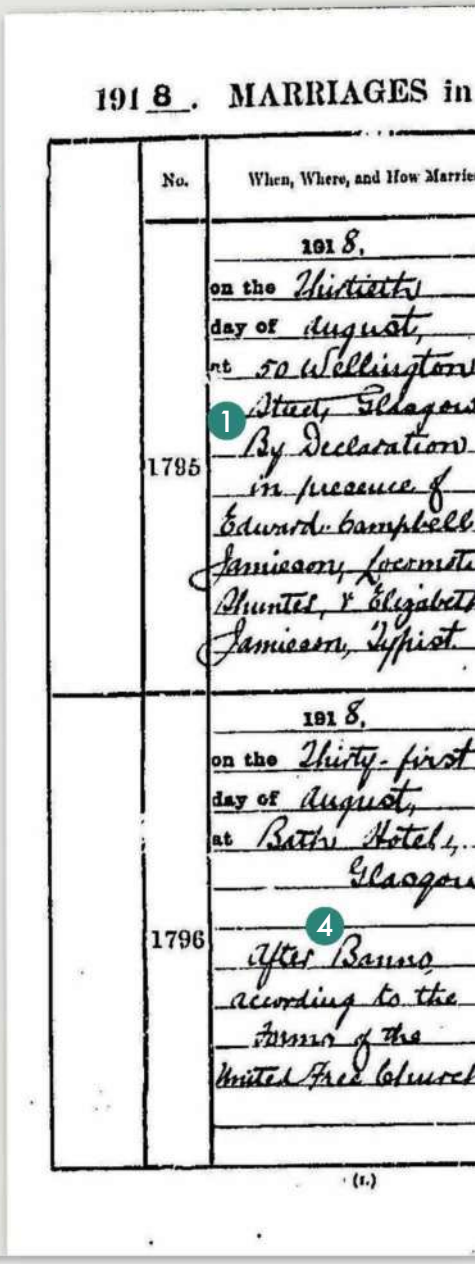
Scottish Civil Marriages

Chris Paton explains the evolution of civil records of regular and irregular marriages in Scotland

The civil registration of marriages in Scotland began in January 1855. As with birth and death records, two copies of marriage registers were created by local registrars. One was retained in the local registration district, while the other was transferred to the General Register Office in Edinburgh, now part of the National Records of Scotland (NRS; **nrscotland.gov.uk**). Boys as young as 14 and girls as young as 12 could wed until 1929, when the age for both increased to 16, still the case today. From 1567 being too closely related could prohibit a marriage: a person could not wed an ancestor, descendant or sibling, aunts/uncles or nephews/nieces, an adoptive parent or child, a wife's sister (until 1907) or a brother's widow (until 1921), although marriage between first cousins was permitted.

From 1855, the advance proclamation of banns by the Church of Scotland was required prior to a regular wedding taking place. From 1856, a minimum Scottish residency requirement of three weeks was also introduced, which continued until 1977, while the 1878 Marriage Notice (Scotland) Act established an alternative to the calling of the banns prior to a wedding, through the use of a marriage notice posted outside the registrar's office. The same Act also permitted other religious

Marriage Register,



1 By Declaration
This entry is for an irregular marriage, with the column noting it was "by declaration", and naming witnesses.

2 Formerly Married
The groom's details include the fact that he was previously married, naming his first wife and the date of divorce.

3 Warrant
An irregular marriage could be registered if the county sheriff-substitute issued a warrant.

4 After Banns
This religious marriage was carried out at a hotel by a United Free Church minister.

5 Agnes Dunlop
Unlike records of English, Welsh and Irish marriages, details of the spouses' mothers are included, not just their fathers' information.

6 Witness
For regular religious or civil marriages, the witnesses' names are entered in a column with the celebrants' name.

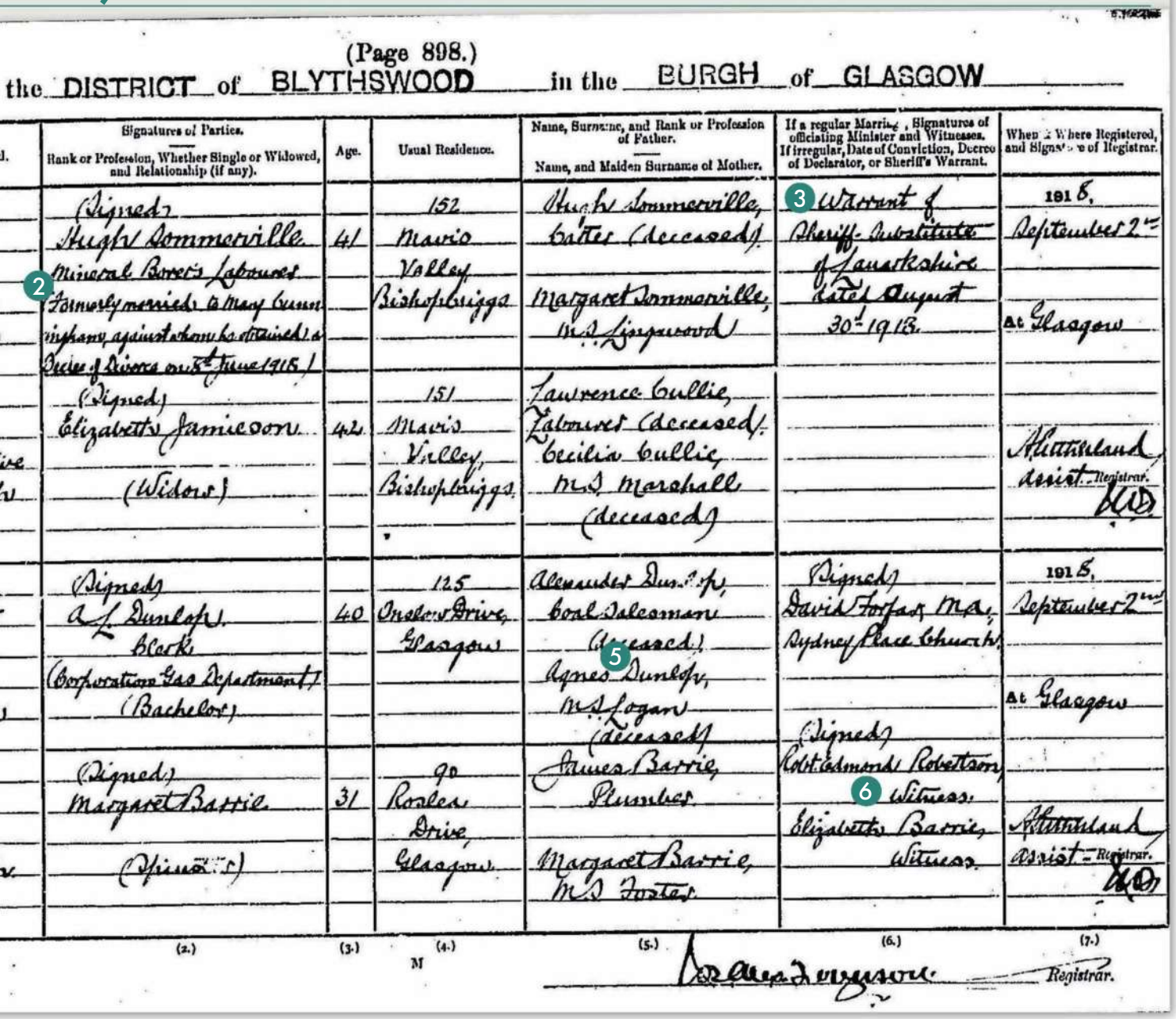
TOP TIP!

Following divorce, the margin note "View RCE" (ie Register of Corrected Entries) means that the ScotlandsPeople page has another document freely available with further details.

GETTY IMAGES

1918

This register of marriages in Blythswood, Glasgow, is held by the National Records of Scotland. Entries are available digitally on ScotlandsPeople (**scotlandspeople.gov.uk**)



(Page 898.)

the DISTRICT of BLYTHSWOOD in the BURGH of GLASGOW

	Signatures of Parties. Rank or Profession, Whether Single or Widowed, and Relationship (if any).	Age.	Usual Residence.	Name, Surname, and Rank or Profession of Father. Name, and Maiden Surname of Mother.	If a regular Marriage, Signatures of officiating Minister and Witnesses. If irregular, Date of Conviction, Decree of Declarator, or Sheriff's Warrant.	When & Where Registered, and Signature of Registrar.
2	(Signed) Hugh Sommerville. Mineral Borer's Labourer Formerly married to Mary Cunningham, against whom he obtained a Decree of Divorce on 5th June 1918.	41	152 Mavis Valley Bishopbriggs	Hugh Sommerville, Father (deceased) Margaret Sommerville, M.S. Lingwood	3 Warrant of Sheriff-Substitute of Lanarkshire Dated August 30th 1918.	1918. September 2nd At Glasgow
	(Signed) Elizabeth Jamieson. (Widow)	42	151 Mavis Valley, Bishopbriggs	Lawrence Cullie, Labourer (deceased) Cecilia Cullie, M.S. Marshall (deceased)		Sutherland Assist. Registrar.
5	(Signed) A. L. Dunlop. Clerk (Corporation Gas Department) (Bachelor)	40	125 Orchard Drive, Glasgow	Alexander Dunlop, Coal Salesman (deceased) Agnes Dunlop, M.S. Logan (deceased)	(Signed) David Forfar, M.A., Sydney Place Church.	1918. September 2nd At Glasgow
6	(Signed) Margaret Barrie. (Spinster)	31	90 Rosslea Drive, Glasgow	James Barrie, Plumber Margaret Barrie, M.S. Foster	(Signed) Robt. Edmond Robertson, Witness. Elizabeth Barrie, Witness.	Sutherland Assist. Registrar.

(1.) (2.) (3.) (4.) M (5.) (6.) (7.)

Registrar.

Statutory marriage records are digitised and indexed, and available online

denominations to call the banns in their own church buildings, rather than the local Church of Scotland parish church.

The use of banns as a form of pre-publication ceased from January 1978, with marriage notices remaining the only form of pre-publication in use today. From 1940 a sheriff's licence was briefly introduced as an alternative to both banns and marriage notices, which was also discontinued from 1978.

If there were no objections following pre-publication, a marriage schedule was issued to the couple, to be returned filled in to the registrar within three days of the ceremony occurring (on penalty of a fine). The registrar copied the information from this schedule into the register, including transcriptions of the parties' signatures; the signatures shown on records were thus written by the registrar, rather than by the couple or their witnesses.

Statutory marriage records are digitised and indexed, and available online via the NRS's pay-per-view website ScotlandsPeople (**scotlandspeople.gov.uk**). When accessing the site ▶

Church Wedding at Culter

A DRESS of white lace over taffeta and net was chosen by Miss Muriel Cooper, daughter of Mr J. W. Cooper, Glaramora, Milltimber, for her wedding to Mr Angus W. Lindsay, son of Mr and Mrs L. Lindsay, Stanley Cottage, Peterculter, in Kelman Memorial Church, Culter, on Saturday.

The bride was attended by the Misses Agnes Fowler and Rosina D'Arcy, who wore dresses of cornflower-blue and pale-pink moire taffeta respectively, with headdresses of anemones.

The bridegroom, a former Royal Artillery officer and a B.Sc. graduate of Aberdeen University, had as his best man Mr William Miller, former Indian Army officer also a B.Sc. graduate of Aberdeen University.

The Rev. James R. Dey officiated at the ceremony.

Graduates Wed at King's College

TWO Aberdeen University graduates were married in King's College Chapel on Saturday.

They were Mr George L. Connon, son of Mrs Edith Connon, Willesden Green, London, and of the late Mr George T. Connon, and Miss Margaret D. Bond, daughter of Mr and Mrs W. Bond, Roundhill, New Pitsligo.

The bride wore a dress of ivory figured satin cut on simple lines and a headdress of orange blossom.

Attending her was her sister, Miss Kathleen Bond, who wore a dress of lilac pink taffeta, with a shawl collar of pink lace, and gloves to match.

Mr Stanley G. Connon, brother of the bridegroom, was best man, and the Rev. W. J. Sinclair, New Pitsligo, officiated.

The bride graduated M.A. in 1946 and the bridegroom gained his B.Sc. (Eng.) the following year. Mr Connon has an appointment with the Royal Naval Scientific Service, Weymouth, where the couple will make their home.

Married in East St Clement's

French brocade cut on princess lines was the choice of Miss Elizabeth Byres Birse for her wedding, in East St Clement's Church, Aberdeen, on Saturday, to Constable William Taylor, son of Mr and Mrs W. Taylor, 172 Clifton Road, Aberdeen.

A daughter of Mr and Mrs Charles Birse, 49 Froghall Terrace, Aberdeen, Miss Birse was attended by Miss Elsie Lovie and Miss Nessie Birse as bridesmaids; Miss Helen Brodie, flower girl; and Master Charles Taylor, page.

The bridesmaids and the flower girl wore dresses of blue and silver tinsel crepe. The page was in Highland dress.

The bridegroom had two best men: Mr Hugh Birse and Mr Angus Wood.

The ceremony was conducted by the Rev. Mitchell Hughes.

Civil marriage records provide crucial information, but more details might be included in newspaper reports

▶ from home, images of historic events can only be viewed if they're over 75 years old; each document costs six credits to view (currently £1.50). More recent events can be viewed at the ScotlandsPeople Centre in Edinburgh (**www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk/visit-us**), and at local registrars' centres across the country (see **nrscotland.gov.uk/research/local-family-history-centres**).

Records of regular marriages before July 1940 will note when and where the marriage was performed, and by which denomination. The couple's details will include names, ages, status (bachelor, spinster, widowed, divorced), occupations and residences. In addition, records will note the names of the couple's fathers, their occupations, and if they're deceased, as well as information on their mothers, including maiden surnames (abbreviated as "m.s"), if deceased, and previous married surnames. The celebrant's name and qualification will be noted, as well as the witnesses' names, and the date and place of registration. For 1855 only, each partner's birthplace is recorded, the number of previous marriages for each, and the number of children produced from these.

The details of irregular marriage records will differ slightly to regular ceremonies

From July 1940, registrars could carry out marriage ceremonies for the first time, with their names inserted instead of a minister.

Irregular Marriage

It was possible to marry irregularly in Scotland prior to July 1940, which involved the simple exchange of consent between partners in the presence of two witnesses, and with no celebrant involved. An irregular marriage could not immediately be registered, however, until a warrant was obtained from the local county sheriff-substitute granting them permission to do so. This was done after the couple was examined and everything found to be in order, for example that they were of legal age, and had satisfied the residency criteria. Such a warrant had to be secured within three months of the wedding, at which point the couple would then visit the registrar to have their marriage documented.

The details of irregular marriage records will differ slightly to regular ceremonies. The first column usually notes that the event happened "by declaration", with the names of the two witnesses stated, and details of the warrant issued rather than those of a celebrant.

CHRIS PATON is an author, genealogist, tutor and researcher who is based in Ayrshire. Find out more at **scotlandsgreateststory.co.uk**

Resources

Take your research further

BOOK

Tracing Your Scottish Ancestry Through Church and State Records
Chris Paton
Pen & Sword, 2019
As well as interpreting civil registration and church marriage records, Chris' book examines the law and traditions surrounding Scottish marriages.

WEBSITES

STATUTORY REGISTER OF MARRIAGES
w **tinyurl.com/scotpeople-statutory-rom**
This detailed online guide from ScotlandsPeople explains what to expect from records of both regular and irregular marriages.

THE SCOTTISH WAY OF BIRTH AND DEATH
w **tinyurl.com/gla-swo-marr**
This site from the Centre for the History of Medicine at Glasgow University includes a useful examination of the law behind marriage, as well as birth and death, divorce and other issues.

Q&A

Our team of experts offers tips and inspiration Edited By Claire Vaughan

Dave Annal is a genealogist, author and lecturer

Alan Crosby is the editor of *The Local Historian* and our columnist (see page 13)

Antony Marr is a fellow, and previous chair, of AGRA and a former deputy registrar

Chris Paton is an author, tutor, genealogist and researcher

Jayne Shrimpton is a professional dress historian and portrait specialist

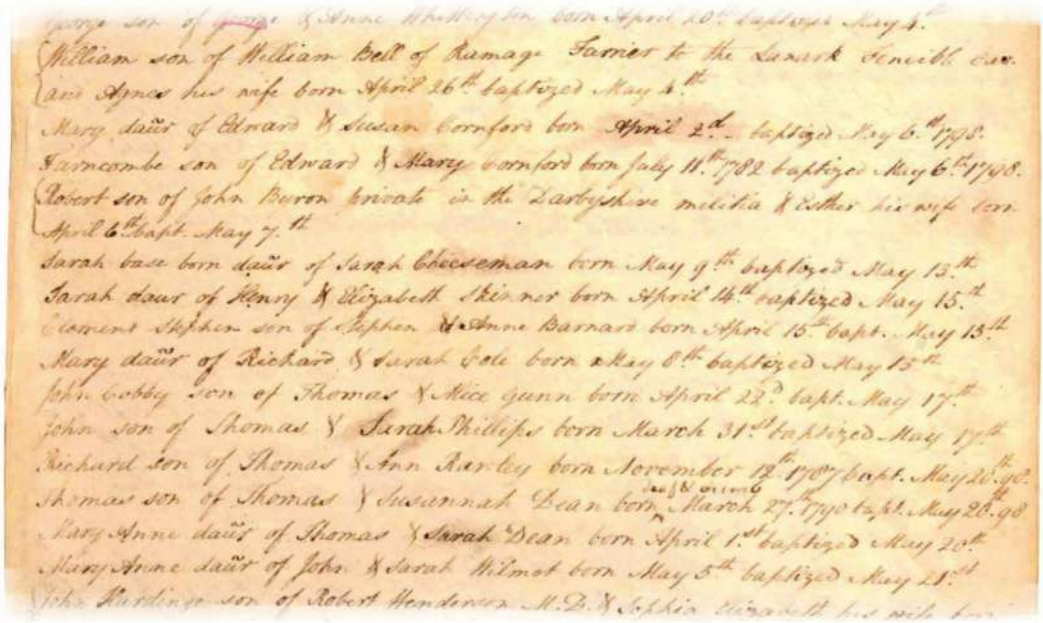
Steve Thomas is a genealogist with over 20 years' experience

Phil Tomaselli is a military family history expert and author

How do I research the Derbyshire Militia?

Q My 5x great grandfather, John Byron, was a private in the Derbyshire Militia, according to the Brighton baptism entry of my 4x great grandfather, Robert Byron. I am interested in discovering more about the Derbyshire Militia, whether there are any associated records concerning John and where he and his family went after his time in the militia. Robert lived in Nottingham, where he was a bricklayer. In the 1851 census, his birthplace is given as Brighton. He married three times, and his father John is recorded in his second and third marriage entries as a bricklayer too.

Jo Darrow



Robert Byron's baptism record reveals that his father, John, was a private in the Derbyshire Militia

A The Militia were part-time soldiers, recruited locally, often by parish ballot (every eligible man's name was entered and randomly selected), fully trained for six months, then sent home to be called up if necessary. They only served within Great Britain, but were paid as regular soldiers and could be moved round the country. Up until 1802, men had to be healthy and aged between 18 and 30, which provides some idea of John's likely age.

There are few militia records online and not many at The National Archives (TNA), probably because recruitment was done, and records kept, locally. Pensions were only awarded to men who were injured or made ill through service. Some records were passed to the War Office. TNA does have discharge to pension records of local militia regiments (1769–1854) in WO 97/1091–1112, but I can't see John Byron's name. There are no muster books for the Derbyshire Militia either.

However, via the 'Advanced Search' page of TNA's catalogue Discovery (**tinyurl.com/tna-disc-adv**) I looked for 'Derbyshire Militia' and selected 'Search other archives'. If you restrict the date range to 1795–1805 you will see that Derbyshire Record Office in Matlock has documents for the 2nd Battalion, Derbyshire Militia, who were on the south coast at the right time, and for the Derbyshire Militia generally. These include orderly books and a fascinating possibility: "Accounts of payment for the support of substitutes' families living in other counties". John may have volunteered to replace a Derbyshire man (for which he'd been paid – legally) and sent money home. Please do consult staff about these records before visiting (**tinyurl.com/derbys-ro**).

Phil Tomaselli

HAVE YOU HIT A BRICK WALL? Please email your questions or family photographs to the following address: **wdytyaquestions@ourmedia.co.uk**

If selected, your query will be answered on these pages. Please note that we receive a large volume of correspondence each month, and cannot reply to each message individually. You are more likely to receive a response if you keep the question and background information concise (no more than 150 words), with a clear goal of enquiry.

What might a page of redacted entries in the 1939 Register be?

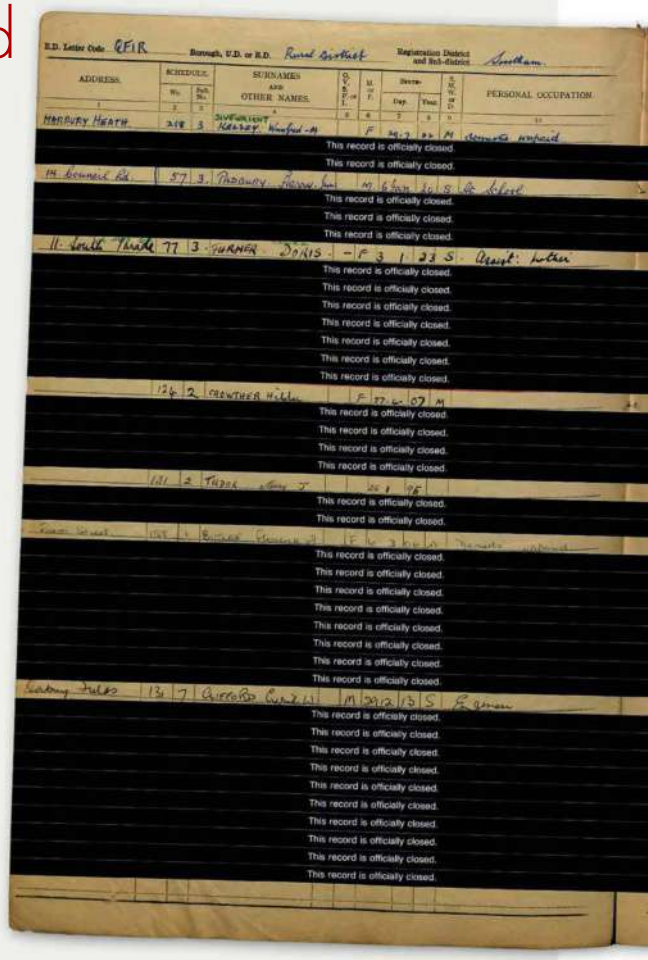
Q Recently I transcribed the 1939 Register for Harbury, Warwickshire, for our Village Heritage Centre. The village is in Southam Registration District – ED letter codes QFIR, QFIS and QFIT. At the end of each letter-code run there is about a page of redacted entries. Could these be evacuee children perhaps? The village did receive evacuees from Essex.
John Holden

A The National Register, compiled on the outbreak of the Second World War, was a working document used initially for issuing ID cards and then, from 1948, as the National Health Service Register. It was still in use as late as 1991, and over the years hundreds of thousands of notes were added by clerks as new information (for example notifications of marriages and deaths) was received. Much of this was recorded in the "postings" column on the right-hand page of the register – the part that we don't have access to.

When this section became full, the clerks would create a "continuation" entry for the individual at the end of the book. These entries are usually cross-referenced (in red ink) and the visible details are, in theory at least, identical to what we see on the original page.

These continuation entries are more likely to relate to younger people – those who lived long enough to have a significant amount of new information recorded about them – and if they were born less than 100 years ago and they're still alive, or if they've died but their death hasn't been notified, their entry (including any continuation entry) will be redacted.

If a particular place received a high number of evacuees, there are likely to be a significant number of redacted entries – both in the main body of the register and on the continuation page(s). Entries for evacuees are also less likely to have been positively identified by relatives, because they may not know where their parents or grandparents were evacuated to. So even if they are known to be dead, there's a greater chance that their entries will still be redacted.
Dave Annal



John found lots of redacted entries in the 1939 Register at the end of each section of his local registration district Southam

Where can I find a death record for Mary Bannister?

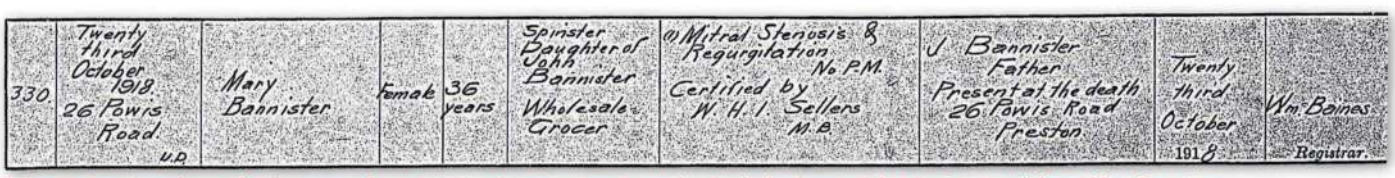
Q I'm looking for a death record for my great grandmother, Mary Bannister. According to her daughter, Mary Evelyn, she 'disappeared'. Tree owners on Ancestry (**ancestry.co.uk**) claim she died in Preston in 1918, but *that* Mary Bannister lived with her parents, unmarried, and died in her 30s of rheumatic heart disease, while my great grandmother had three children. My great grandfather, Joseph Walton, took up with an Edith Hooper and had more children. He and Edith never married, as was claimed on their combined gravestone. What happened to Mary?
Catherine Geldhart

A Finding someone who 'disappears' is always difficult because you are dealing with so many unknowns. Mary could have emigrated, died, changed her name, married again, or just lived with someone and used their surname.

Look at records in which you may be able to identify her: the 1921 census, perhaps electoral rolls later, and especially the 1939 Register, which has a date of birth recorded. Even if she changed her surname, a search for a Mary with her birthdate will give a list of records for you to investigate.

Ancestry has trees containing the family, but, like you, I'm not certain that the 'correct' Mary Bannister has been identified. Start by checking you have all of the possible information about her before she disappeared. Her marriage certificate to Joseph Walton will give her age and father's details, for example. From there, you will hopefully identify a birth registration, and get her date of birth. With her correct family identified, you can follow her parents and siblings forward to see if she lived with any of them later.

The National Archives has a 1920 divorce application (J 77/1586/9200) by the husband of Edith Hooper (as Edith Mary Renn) where Joseph Walton is a co-respondent (**tinyurl.com/disc-renn**). If granted, why did Joseph and Edith never marry – unless they knew Mary was alive? Check to see what the record contains.
Antony Marr


330 | Twenty third October 1918 | 26 Powis Road | Mary Bannister | Female | 36 years | Spinster Daughter of John Bannister Wholesale Grocer | (a) Mitral Stenosis & Regurgitation No P.M. Certified by W. H. I. Sellers M.B | J Bannister Father Present at the death 26 Powis Road Preston | Twenty third October 1918 | Wm Baines Registrar.
Catherine has viewed some family trees on Ancestry citing this as her great grandmother's death record, but it refers to a different Mary Bannister

Picture Analysis

Is this my great grandmother?

Q I'm hoping you can tell me the approximate date that this photograph was taken. I believe it portrays my grandfather's mother, who was born in 1871.
Dru DeVore

A This fine outdoor scene was taken by a local professional photographer commissioned to come out and visit your ancestors at home. From the late 1800s, technological advances facilitated outdoor photography on location away from the studio. This often proved convenient for clients who were, for instance, very elderly or who included infants: those who might not easily travel into town. Usually, the setting was the family garden, giving a rare glimpse of our forebears' domestic surroundings. Frequently a chair was brought out from inside the house, the composition arranged like a studio portrait.

Online data for early East Anglian photographers states that Llewellyn Walter Wallis was running his Ely and Mildenhall studios by 1900, and this image confirms a year pre-1900, because the lady wears a formal daytime gown firmly dateable to the mid-to-late 1890s. She looks to be aged in her 20s, so could well be your great grandmother, born 1871, as suggested. The toddler, also well dressed in 'Sunday best' late Victorian smock and pinafore, is likely to be her first-born child. His/her first birthday was perhaps the occasion that prompted this special photograph.
Jayne Shrimpton

1 FORMAT
This professionally presented photograph is either a *carte de visite* measuring around 4 inches x 2½ inches or a larger cabinet card (approximately 6½ inches x 4¼ inches), both common formats in the 1890s.

2 MOUNT
Black and other dark-coloured photographic card mounts were fashionable in c1882–1903, and especially popular during the 1890s.

3 HAIRSTYLE
Her upswept hairstyle, secured into a high knot, is typical of the later 1890s and the early 1900s.

4 BROOCH
Her narrow horizontal bar brooch was the prevailing style of brooch worn during the 1890s.

5 BODICE
By the 1890s, ordinary ancestors could follow fashion if they wished. The bodice style featuring a high collar, vertical pleats and, especially, her puffed upper sleeves dates to c1896–1899.

6 TODDLER'S CLOTHES
The toddler could be either male or female because late Victorian infants were dressed alike in frocks, pinafores and petticoats until boys reached three to four years old. Even their shoes were similar.

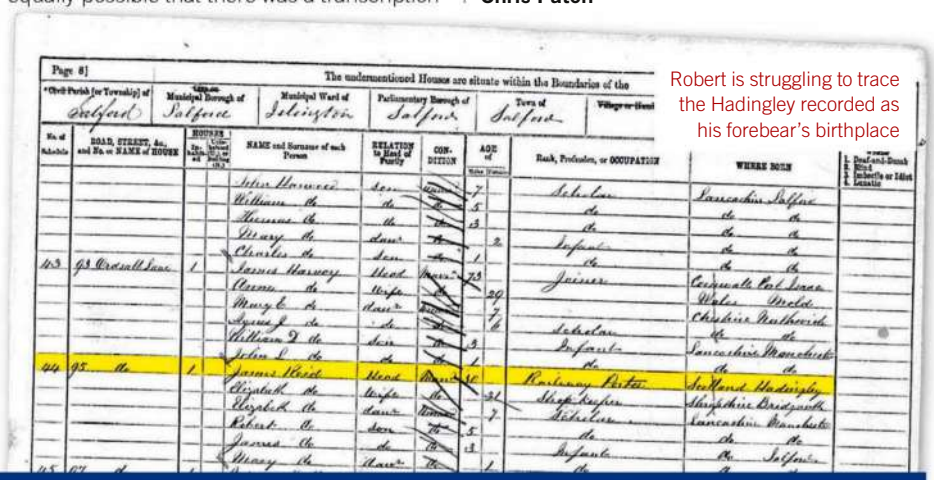
Where in Scotland is Hadingley?

Q I'm looking for some guidance with this 1871 Salford census return. It states that my great great grandad was born in Hadingley, Scotland. I know that the family seem to originate from the area of Minnigaff, Kirkcudbright, but I can't find any reference to Hadingley on any old maps or any reference/history books.
Robert Reid

A There is no parish name or village called Hadingley in Scotland, but it may have been the name of a farm or settlement. There are some gazetteer resources that can help in such queries, such as Francis Groome's *Ordnance Gazetteer of Scotland* (1892–1896), available online at Electric Scotland (**electricscotland.com/history/gazetteer/index.htm**), and Samuel Lewis' *Topographical Dictionary of Scotland*, online at the National Library of Scotland's (NLS's) website (**digital.nls.uk/gazetteers-of-scotland-1803-1901/archive/97491610**), but neither of them has an entry for a Hadingley.

If your assumption that it may be in Kirkcudbrightshire is correct, there are more resources to try. The Ordnance Survey Name Books for the county from 1848–1851 can be found on ScotlandsPlaces (**tinyurl.com/sp-os-kirkcud**), detailing every place name in Kirkcudbrightshire recorded for the 19th-century mapping exercise, while the NLS's mapping platform at **maps.nls.uk** may also help. It could be worth contacting the Borders Family History Society (**bordersfhs.org.uk**) too.

It may be that the place name James gave to the enumerator has since changed, but it is equally possible that there was a transcription error by the enumerator when carrying over the place of birth from his original household schedule, perhaps with somewhere such as Haddington mis-recorded as "Hadingley". Equally the word "Scotland" may be an error – there is a Headingley in Leeds, for example. Try searching for additional records such as poor-relief applications, which may note his place of birth, or consider taking an autosomal DNA test to try to confirm a place of origin through cousin matches.
Chris Paton



Robert is struggling to trace the Hadingley recorded as his forebear's birthplace

TOP TIP **The website A Vision of Britain Through Time (visionofbritain.org.uk) is a useful nationwide online resource for locating historic places. It is also helpful for working out the parish or registration district that an ancestor lived in.**

In which house in Eglingham did my ancestor live?

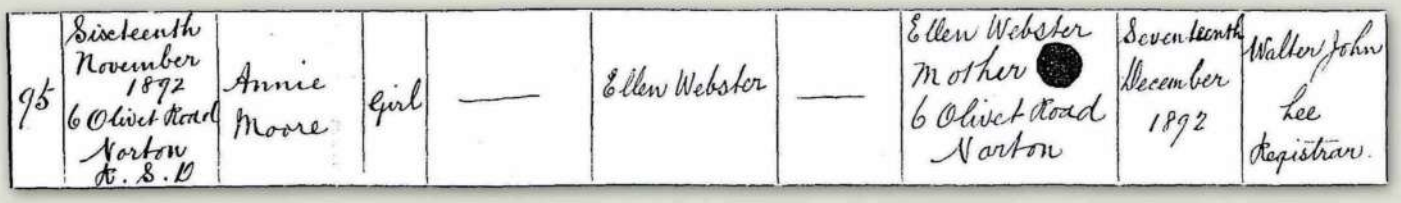
Q My ancestor, William Stoddart, lived in Eglingham in the late 1800s. In the 1881 census, he and his family were living next to the school. I'd like to visit where they lived. How do I match residences in the censuses to current maps?
Evan Klatt

A This question highlights a widespread problem. In the Victorian period (and indeed much later) very few properties in small rural communities (such as Eglingham) had a precise address. Everybody was known personally to the postman, and the census enumerators had no means of separately identifying the individual properties. The result is that, typically, the only places named in the 1881 Eglingham census return are the two pubs, the post office, the schoolhouse and the vicarage – in other words, those with a specific identity.

The census enumerator would have walked through the village from house to house. Using the named buildings as 'landmarks', we can therefore work out the order in which he visited. He started at the eastern end, on the north side of the single street, and walked westwards, then retraced his steps on the other side of the road. In the census return, this particular Stoddart family (there are several in the village) is listed immediately after the Post Office and the schoolhouse. So we can be pretty confident (although not absolutely certain) that they were living in the first house west of the school.

This requires us to check with contemporary maps. For this I would always recommend the Ordnance Survey section of the National Library of Scotland's maps website (**maps.nls.uk/os**). We need a large-scale map, and the 25 inch to 1 mile (1:2500) series is perfect for our requirements. An edition was published in 1897, and it shows the houses and cottages in detail. This allows us to identify the likely dwelling. I cross-referenced with Google Street View (**google.com/streetview**), and it looks like the house is still there, but has been extended westwards in recent years.
Alan Crosby

This Ordnance Survey map from 1897 depicts Eglingham in Northumberland



95	Sixteenth November 1892 6 Olivet Road Norton E.S.D	Annie Moore	girl	—	Ellen Webster	—	Ellen Webster mother 6 Olivet Road Norton	Seventeenth December 1892	Walter John Lee Registrar.

Steve Thomas believes this is the birth record for Annie Webster

Can you help me find Annie's birth record?

Q I'm trying to find out where and when my husband's grandmother, Annie Webster, was born. The first confirmed documentation I have relating to her is of her marriage to Herbert Alcock in Grimsby, Lincolnshire, on 30 December 1919. She was 27 and gave her father's name as William Webster.

Herbert died on 9 April 1928 leaving Annie with two children. As Annie Alcock, she married William Crowther in Barton on Humber, Lincolnshire, on 21 February 1939. She was 46 and gave no father's name.

On the 1939 Register, she gave a birthdate of 17 November 1893. She died on 24 June 1940 age 47.

According to the family, she was born in 1892/1893 and spent time in an orphanage or workhouse in Sheffield, Yorkshire, but we can't find a birth certificate.

Jacki Haddock

JACKI HADDOCK is struggling to discover when and where her husband's forebear was born

The additional middle name is probably a nod in the direction of the putative father

A Confirming Annie's birthplace is key, and the only place she would have provided this where you know it is definitely her is in the 1921 census. She had a child, Marjorie, in the first quarter of 1921, but the Alcock family do not appear in the index. Marjorie is an uncommon name and the General Register Office (GRO; **www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content**) confirms that she was born in Grimsby Registration District. A search using just these two pieces of information (and not her surname) in the 1921 census index at Findmypast (**findmypast.co.uk**) revealed a child with an unlikely surname: Marjorie Boarder born Grimsby in the house of people named George and Freda.

A subsequent search for Annie Boarder turned up a person by that name born in Sheffield in 1893. The copy of the original shows that this, of course, is an indexing error and that the Alcock family were lodgers. Annie confirms her birthday as 17 November and gives her age as 28 years, which suggests (as does her marriage certificate) that she was born in 1892.

The 1901 census shows that she was indeed in the workhouse as the family story suggested. She was aged eight and would be nine the following November, again indicating a year of birth of 1892 rather than 1893. She was in Ecclesall Workhouse. An 'Index to Register of Inmates, Ecclesall Bierlow Workhouse, 1883–1907', which includes birthdates, is online divided into four PDFs: **tinyurl.com/ind-ecc-a-to-c**, **tinyurl.com/ind-ecc-d-to-j**, **tinyurl.com/ind-ecc-k-to-r** and, for surnames at the end of the alphabet, **tinyurl.com/ind-ecc-s-to-z**.

This information is taken from the record collection of Sheffield City Archives. Annie is not in the index, yet a fellow inmate on the same census page, Ada Wood, is. The entries for the 1890s seem sparse compared with later ones, and you should approach Sheffield Archives and find out what does not appear in the index, or see if her entry was missed (**sheffield.gov.uk/libraries-archives/access-archives-local-studies-library**).

Sadly, it was the policy of Ecclesall Workhouse to separate children from their parents. So finding family groups in the census is not possible.

There appears to be an inconsistent survival rate for documentation relating to Sheffield workhouses. The main two were Sheffield and Ecclesall, but since she was clearly in the system, there may be more to be found in the archives about her time there and the circumstances that brought this about.

Regarding her birth: there are two major registration districts covering Sheffield, and between October 1892 and March 1894, there are just two possibilities: Annie Moore Webster, December 1892, Eccesall Bierlow (9c 387), and Annie Elizabeth Webster, December 1893, Sheffield (9c 523). Birth certificates for this period can be downloaded as digital images from the GRO for £3. The second of these refers to a child baptised on 8 October 1893. The first appears to be the person we are looking for: Annie Moore, daughter of Ellen Webster, was born on 16 November 1892 at Olivet Road, Norton, and registered on 17 November 1892.

The additional middle name is probably a nod in the direction of the putative father. Also, birthdays are often a day out, especially if the child was born in the night.

Steve Thomas

What regiment is this soldier in?

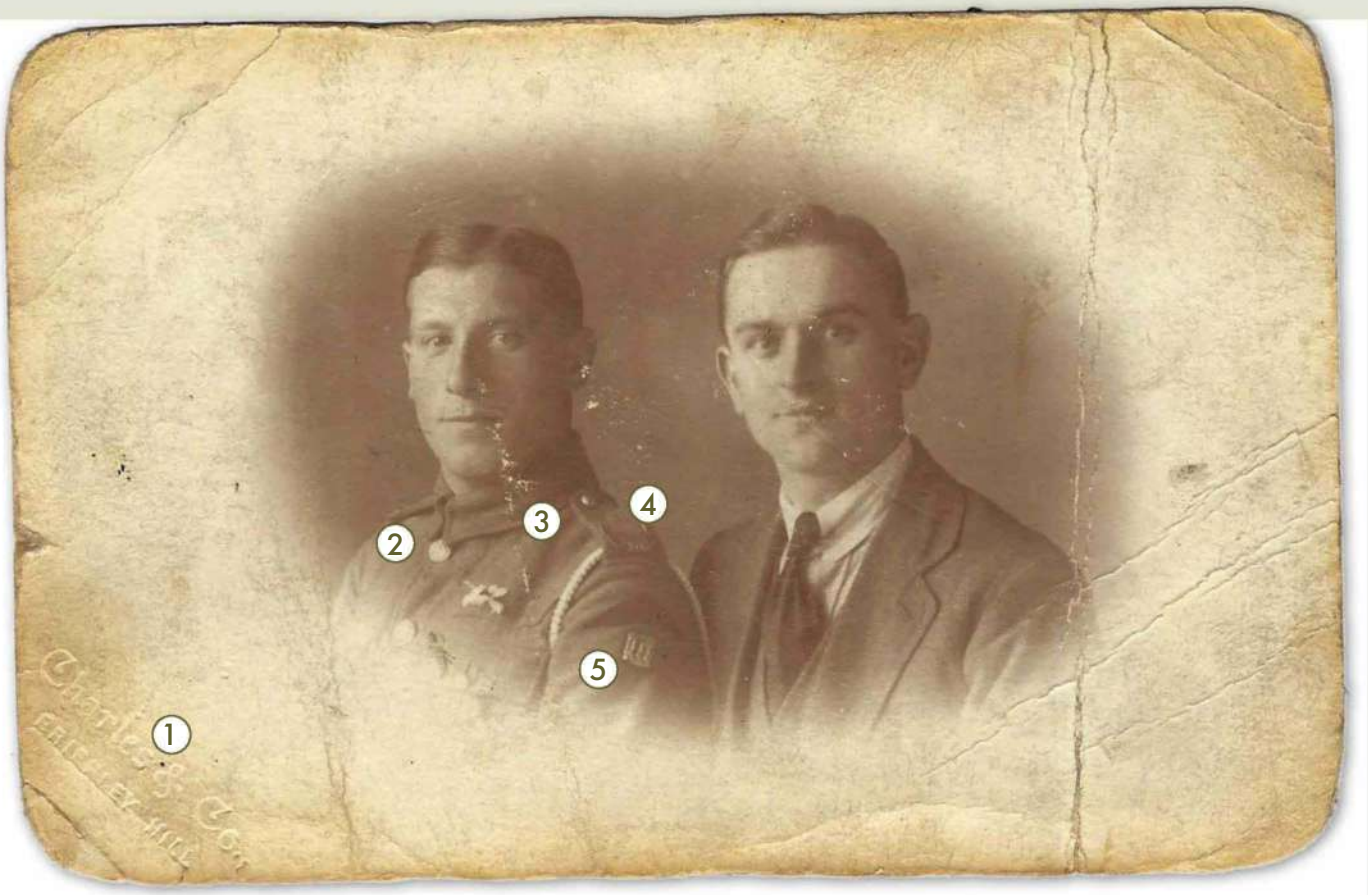
Q Can you tell me the regiment of the chap in uniform please? He could be George P Brannon (born 1913, Stourbridge) or John Bullock (born 1899, Stourbridge) – both cousins of John Tyler (born 1889, Stourbridge), the other man pictured; or George Wilfred Tyler, another cousin (born 1921).
Kim Attwood

A This photograph shows a soldier of the Worcestershire Regiment taken in 1918 or 1919. This date range rules out George Brannon and George Wilfred Tyler. I'm guessing that your John Bullock is the John Bullock, crane driver, born 29 August 1899, living in Stourbridge in the 1939 Register. If so then he'd have been eligible for conscription after his 18th birthday in August 1917. Anyone under 19 who'd received six months' training could serve abroad.

Worcestershire Archive & Archaeology Service has transcribed Worcestershire Absent Voters' Rolls for 1918 and 1919, on its site **explorethepast.co.uk**, but there's no John Bullock registered from Stourbridge. This may be because servicemen had to be 19 on 15 April 1918 to vote, and he wasn't.

The National Archives' website **nationalarchives.gov.uk** has well-indexed Medal Index Cards. I can only find one John Bullock in the Worcesters: John Bullock, no. 241734, who served in France with the 2nd/8th Worcesters. His pension card contains very little, except that he was demobbed on 26 May 1919.

Two War Diaries for the 2nd/8th Worcesters from 1918 can be downloaded free from TNA (WO 95/2251/2 and WO 95/3057/2).
Phil Tomaselli



1 PHOTOGRAPHER Charles & Co. was a well-established photographers in Brierley Hill. I suspect the picture was taken when John returned home.

2 BUTTONS Shiny metal buttons on what appears to be a standard tunic make it less likely that it's a Second World War uniform, when battledress had flaps to cover buttons (which soon became plastic anyway).

3 PLEAT The single pleat we can see underneath the collar shows that this is a 1918 issue tunic, the collar consisting of a single layer of cloth allowing it to be worn more comfortably.

4 TITLE The curved brass shoulder title was rapidly phased out and replaced by cloth insignia in the Second World War. I have to think it says "Worcestershire".

5 BADGE This formation badge indicates the unit. I don't recognise it, but it suggests that he'd served in a fighting unit.

MERCHANDISE

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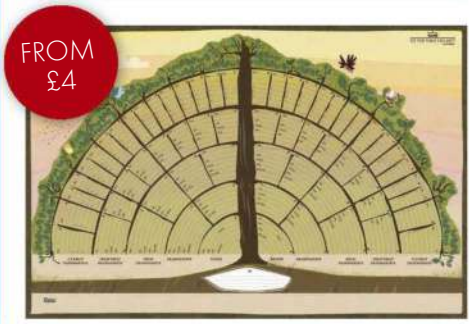

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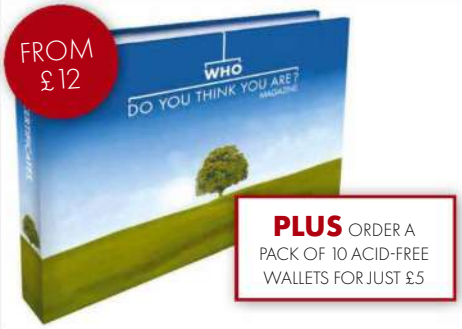

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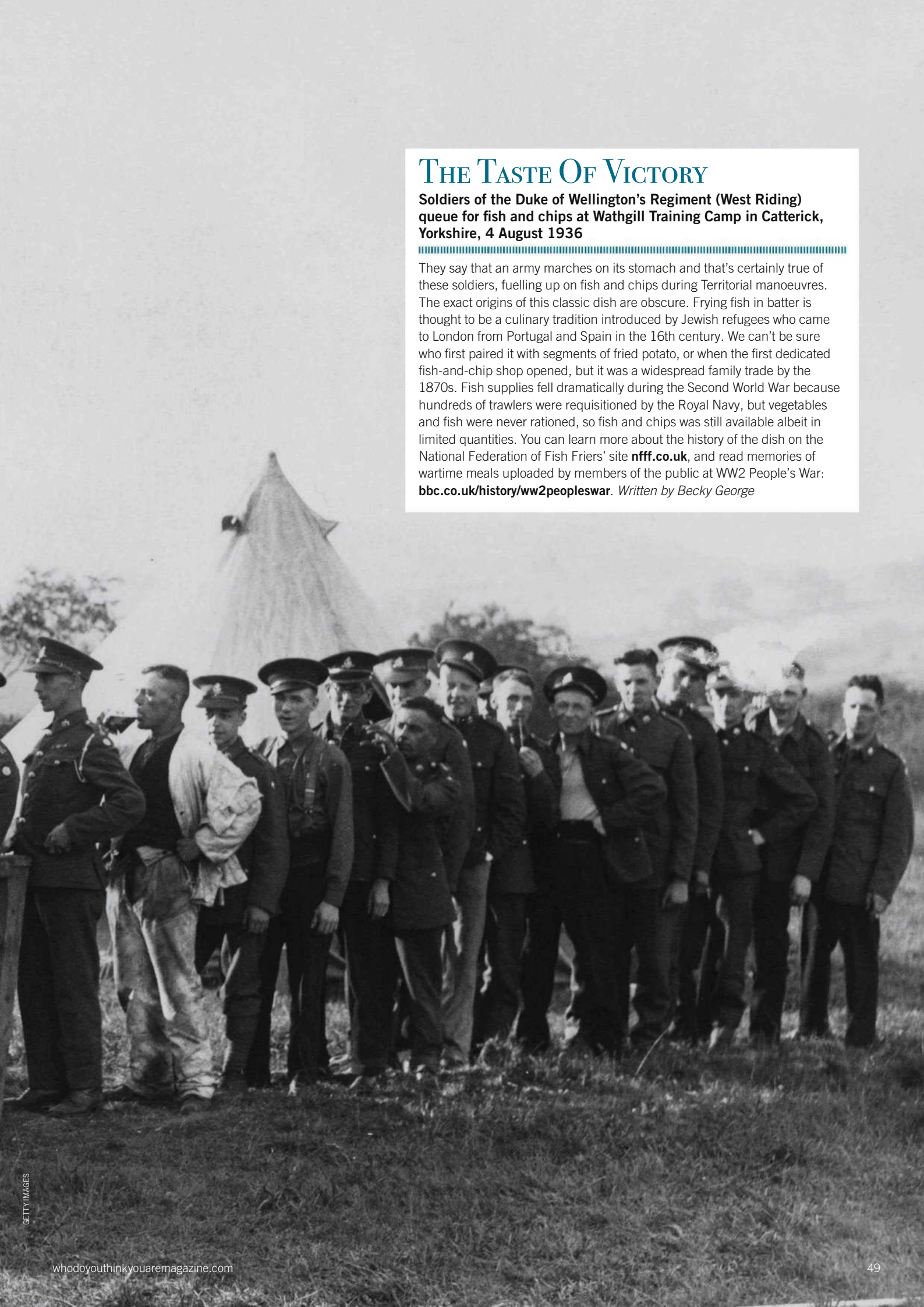
LOCAL INDUSTRY

Celebrating our ancestors' work in key trades

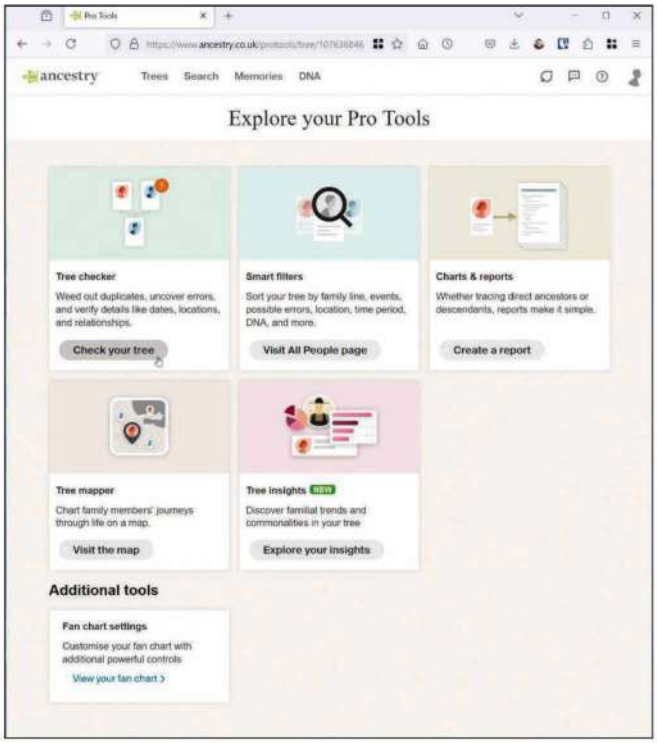
The Taste Of Victory

Soldiers of the Duke of Wellington's Regiment (West Riding) queue for fish and chips at Wathgill Training Camp in Catterick, Yorkshire, 4 August 1936

They say that an army marches on its stomach and that's certainly true of these soldiers, fuelling up on fish and chips during Territorial manoeuvres. The exact origins of this classic dish are obscure. Frying fish in batter is thought to be a culinary tradition introduced by Jewish refugees who came to London from Portugal and Spain in the 16th century. We can't be sure who first paired it with segments of fried potato, or when the first dedicated fish-and-chip shop opened, but it was a widespread family trade by the 1870s. Fish supplies fell dramatically during the Second World War because hundreds of trawlers were requisitioned by the Royal Navy, but vegetables and fish were never rationed, so fish and chips was still available albeit in limited quantities. You can learn more about the history of the dish on the National Federation of Fish Friers' site **nfff.co.uk**, and read memories of wartime meals uploaded by members of the public at WW2 People's War: **bbc.co.uk/history/ww2peopleswar**. *Written by Becky George*



GETTY IMAGES



Unlock the full power of your trees with Pro Tools

Nick Peers reveals how Ancestry's new tools can take your online trees to the next level

Ancestry (**ancestry.co.uk**) has just brought its Pro Tools to UK users. These provide additional advanced facilities on its website (but not the Ancestry app) to help you do more with your Ancestry-hosted trees. The tools themselves will be familiar to anyone who also uses family history software, and include a Tree Checker that alerts you to possible errors and duplicates. There are also advanced filters for viewing specific parts of a tree, various charts and reports, and access to a small selection of insights about your tree. Rounding things off is a map allowing you to pinpoint ancestors (and their movements).

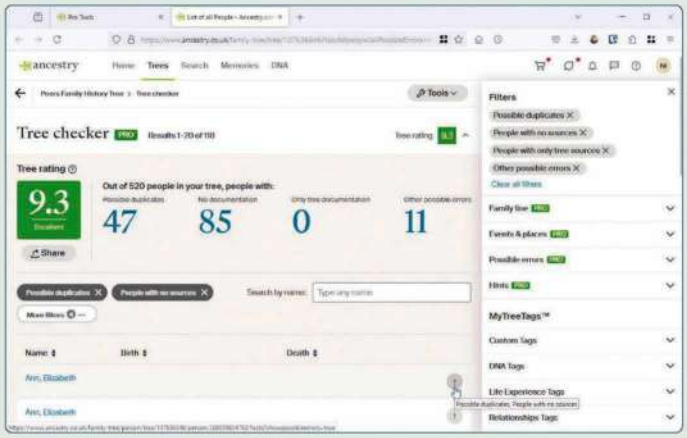
The Pro Tools are only available to family historians who have an active Ancestry membership, and require you to pay an additional monthly fee of £4.99/€5.49/$10 on top of your existing subscription.

Once signed up, you'll find that the tools are prominently displayed via a Pro Tools shortcuts panel on your Ancestry homepage, or you can navigate to **ancestry.co.uk/protools** to access them directly. Once done, follow our walkthrough to discover what each tool does and how to use it.

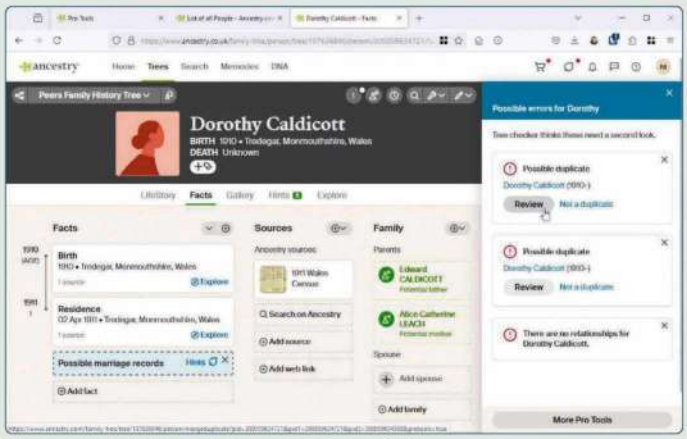
You should also keep checking back for new tools in the coming months as Ancestry rolls out additional features.

TOP TIP!

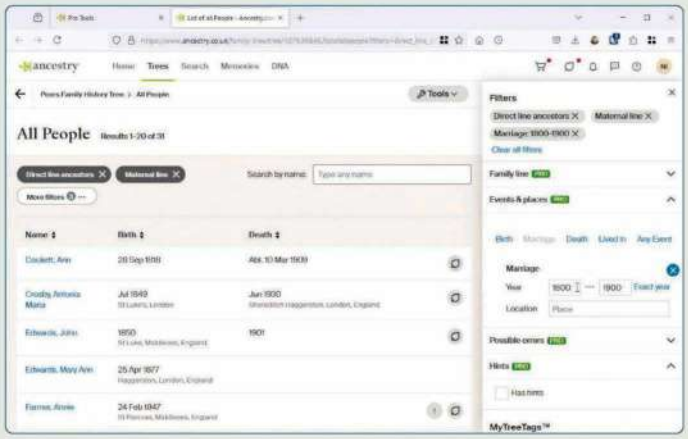
The beta version of the new Tree Mapper tool only covers the USA at present – it uses colour to indicate the number of people featured in each US state.



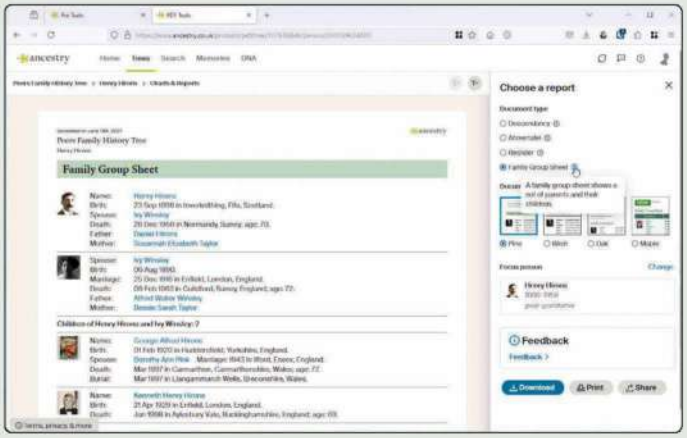
1 Check Your Tree Click 'Check your tree' on the Pro Tools homepage. Your tree will be given an overall rating alongside a summary of potential problems that match any of four categories. Click 'More filters…' to view these and remove any unwanted ones (click X next to the filter).



2 Resolve An Error Click the 'i' next to a person's name on the list – you'll be taken to their profile page where you'll see a list of potential problems listed on the right. Click 'Review' next to any flagged errors to check their validity. If a fix is offered, you'll be able to resolve the issue from here.

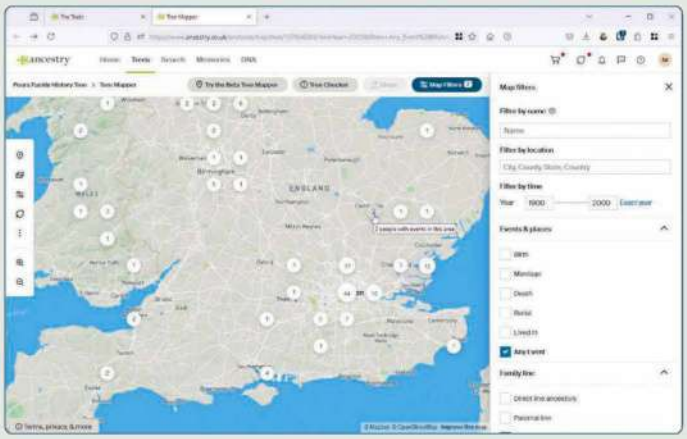


3 View Your Tree Using Filters Click 'Visit All People page' on the main Pro Tools page to access a complete list of all of the relations in your tree. Click 'More filters…' to bring up a list showing four categories. Click one to expand it and view its filters. Tick one or more filters to see which people match.



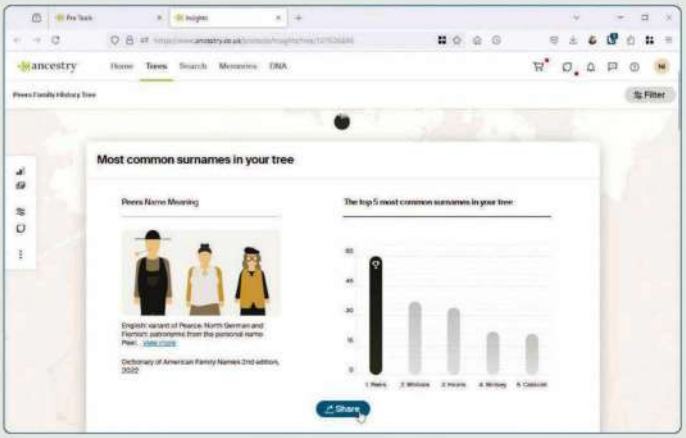
4 Generate A Report Click 'Create a report' to generate one of four currently supported reports. Choose your document type, style, the number of generations and your focus person, and use the T+ and T- buttons to alter the size of the text. You can then download (as a PDF), print or share the report.

7 View Additional Insights Scroll down to see whether longevity and large families run in your family, plus view a list of young married couples in your tree. Click 'Filter' to restrict these insights to direct-line ancestors, or either maternal or paternal lines. Keep checking back to see if new insights have been added.

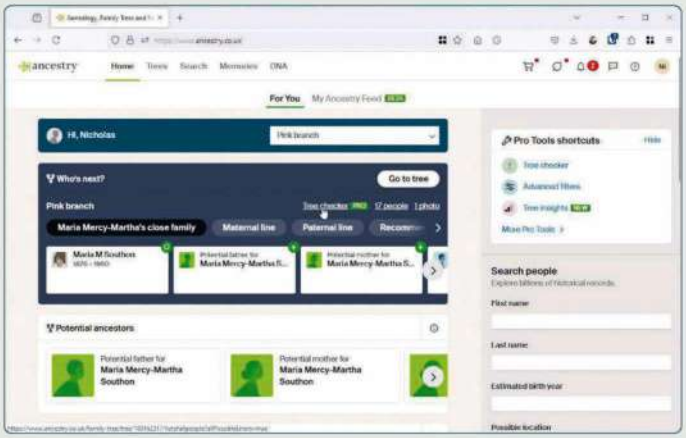


5 Access The Mapping Tools Click 'Visit the map' to view a global map that displays all events with a recognised place name in their exact spot. Zoom in for a closer view, then click on a number to view the events recorded at that location, which can be filtered by person, location or relationship in the right-hand pane.

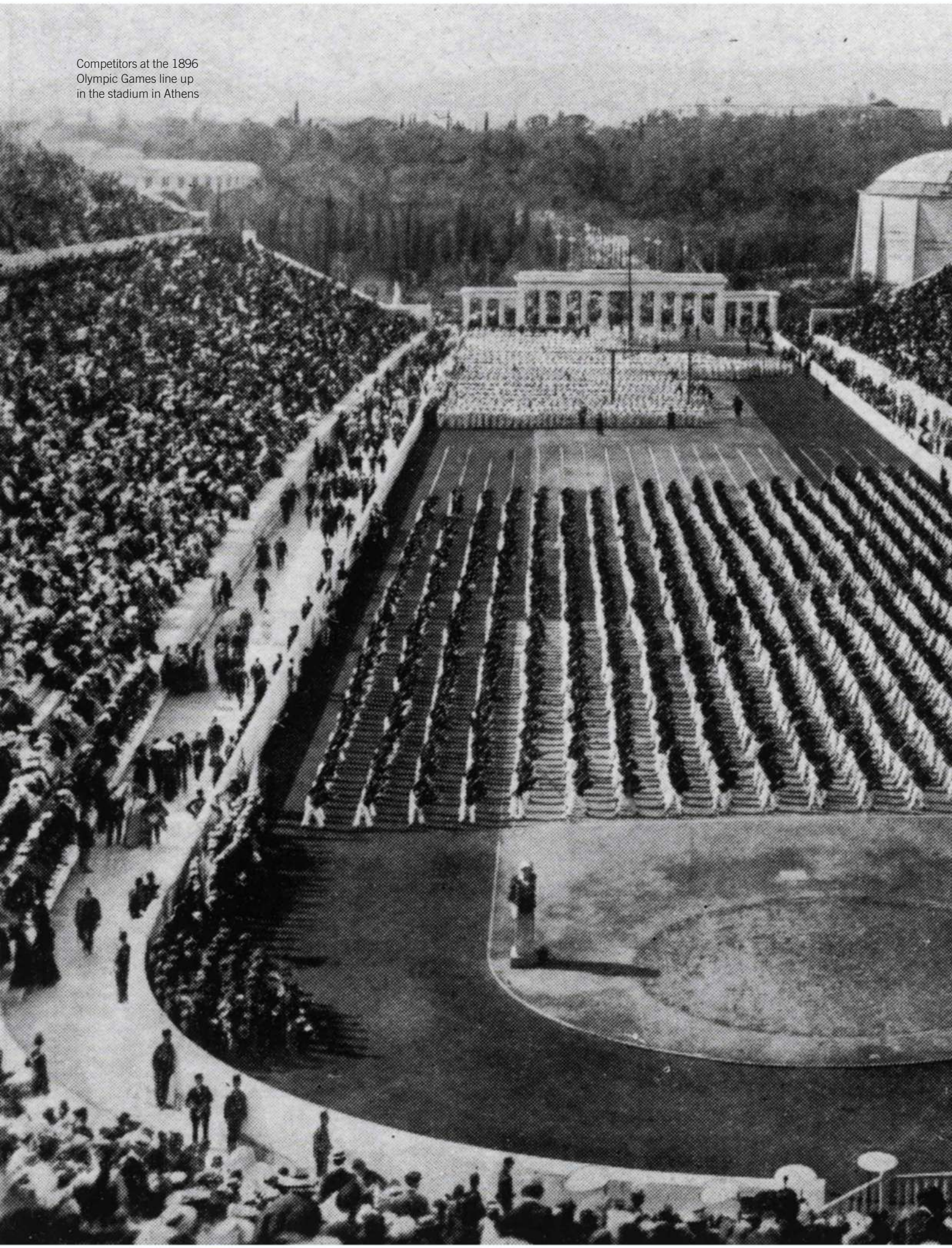
8 Customise Your Fan Charts Users of Ancestry Pro Tools also gain additional options when constructing fan charts. These are accessible from the 'Fan settings' dropdown menu and include the ability to show up to seven generations at once, plus display colour-coded charts based on the hints, photos or sources in your tree.



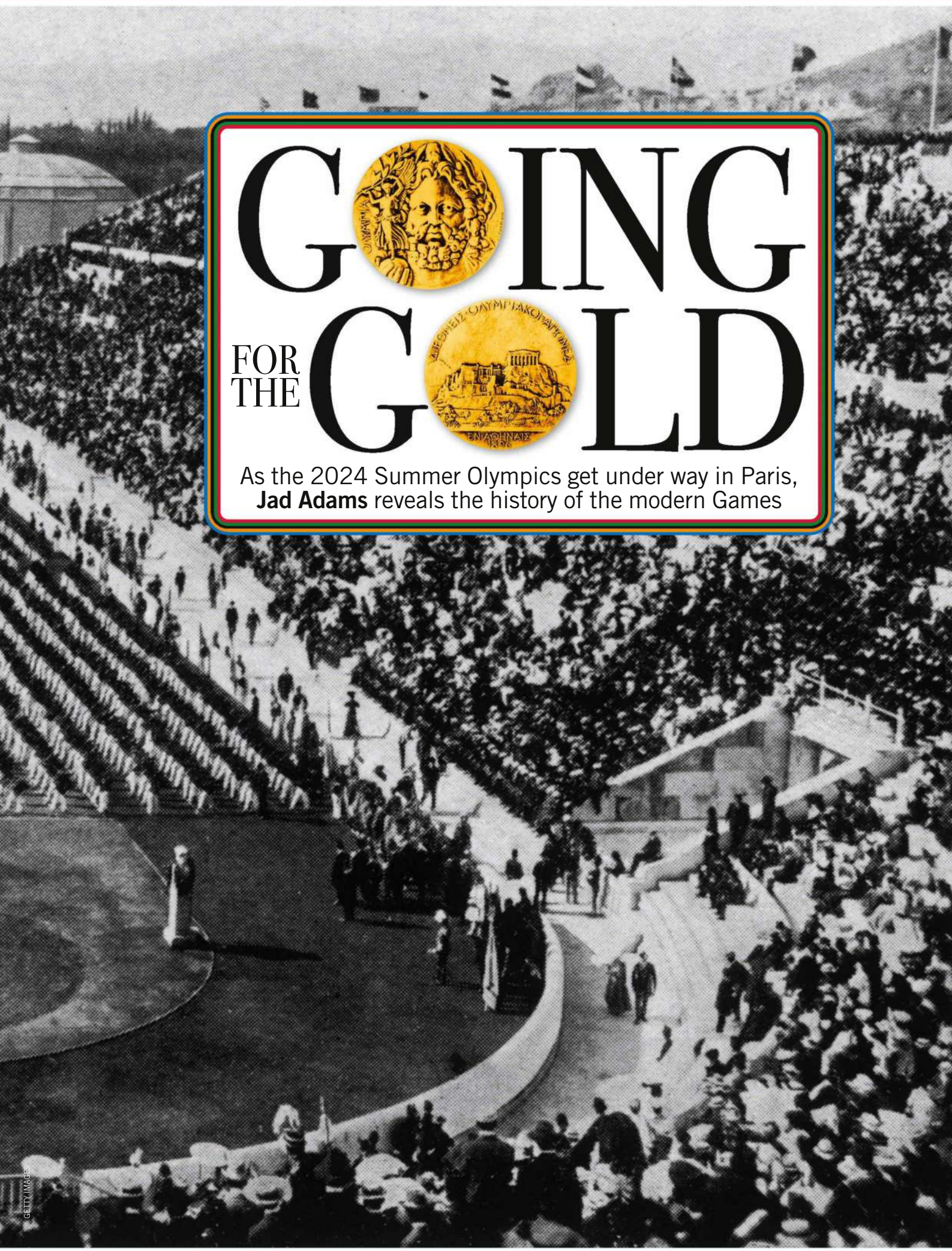
6 Discover Family Insights Clicking 'Explore your insights' reveals four bits of interesting information about your family tree. First is a graph showing the most common surnames. Click an entry to select it and you'll be given a brief meaning of that surname, together with a link to more detailed information.



9 Work With Another Tree Ancestry Pro Tools works with one tree at a time, so if you want to use them on another tree you own or edit, switch to the tree in question first. You can then access the tools from their hub or keep an eye out for shortcuts to specific tools across your tree's pages – including its homepage.



Competitors at the 1896 Olympic Games line up in the stadium in Athens



GOING FOR THE GOLD

As the 2024 Summer Olympics get under way in Paris, **Jad Adams** reveals the history of the modern Games

GETTY IMAGES

The revival of the Olympic Games in modern times owes a great deal to a doctor from a small town in Shropshire. William Penny Brookes was born in 1809 in Much Wenlock, where he spent his entire working life until he died there in 1895. His legacy has been the amateur Games that take place in the great cities of the world every four years.

The son of the local doctor, Brookes qualified and took over the practice when his father died. He was consumed by a passion for self-improvement and the elevation of the working class, so set up the Wenlock Agricultural Reading Society in 1841 which loaned books to people too poor to buy them. To fund his endeavours he wrote to such celebrities as the ironmaster Abraham Darby IV and the Duke of Wellington, requesting financial donations and gifts of books.

The Benefits Of Athletics

As an adjunct to the library, he organised classes including art, 'philharmonic' (music study) and botany. He also set up an 'Olympian Class', demonstrating a belief in the improving power of athletics. According to the minutes of a public society meeting in 1850, it was resolved unanimously "That it was desirable that a class should be established in connexion with the Agricultural Reading Society for the promotion of the moral, physical and intellectual improvement of the inhabitants of the town & neighbourhood of Wenlock and especially of the Working classes, by the encouragement of out-door recreation, and by the award of Prizes annually at public meetings for skill in Athletic exercise and proficiency in Intellectual and industrial attainments".

The first Wenlock Olympian Games were held in October 1850. They were a mixture of athletics and traditional country games such as quoits, football and cricket. Categories were not so distinct as they would become, with newspapers referring to the "half mile foot race" and the "leaping in distance" event.

It was at this point that the earnest, self-improving ideal of the Victorians joined with their adulation of the classical past. The civilisation of ancient Greece was held up as an ideal. Could the games festivals of the 6th century BCE, the most famous of which were held in Olympia on the Peloponnese peninsula, be revivified for the modern era?

The start of a round in the 10-mile walk at the White City Stadium during the 1908 Games in London

Brookes corresponded with Greek, French and German enthusiasts for reviving the ancient Games. One was a young French aristocrat called Baron Pierre de Coubertin, who was making a name for himself promoting physical education and the role of sport in schools.

Brookes invited him to Much Wenlock in 1890, where a session of the Olympian Games was held in his honour. The 27-year-old baron and 81-year-old doctor became friends, and Brookes shared with Coubertin his dream of an Olympic revival with Games held in Athens.

Coubertin took the baton and ran with it, using his elite international connections and his prodigious energy to inspire others. On 25 November 1892, at a meeting of the Union des Sociétés Françaises de Sports Athlétiques in Paris, he advocated a revived Olympic Games with the lofty ambition that "the cause of Peace will have received a new and strong ally".

Much lobbying and committee work followed. An international

GETTY IMAGES

Charlotte Cooper 1870–1966

Meet the tennis player who was the first woman to win gold as an individual

The first woman to win a gold medal at the Olympics as an individual was Charlotte Cooper, known as 'Chattie'. She was born at Wadham Lodge, Ealing, Middlesex, on 22 September 1870 to miller Henry Cooper and his wife Teresa. She showed early promise at the Ealing Lawn Tennis Club, and went on to win the Wimbledon Singles Championship for the first of five times in 1895.

At the 1900 Paris Olympics she won two gold medals: for the women's singles and the mixed doubles. In 1901 she married Alfred Sterry, a solicitor, and took his name so her later wins are recorded as Charlotte Sterry.

Her entry in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* has a fascinating note: "Mrs Sterry had been deaf since she was twenty-six and in later years lost most of her sight, but her mind and memory remained razor sharp and her morale was excellent."

For many years it had been Cooper's ambition to be the oldest living Wimbledon champion. She was only three months short of her 91st birthday when she flew down unaccompanied from Scotland during the 1961 Wimbledon season to attend a lunch for the tournament's former champions.

She died on 10 October 1966 at Helensburgh, Dunbartonshire.

conference on sport in 1894 accepted his proposal for the Olympic Games, although with little enthusiasm. The first Games were to be held in Athens in April 1896 under an International Olympic Committee (IOC) which ended up (after the First World War) being based in Lausanne, Switzerland, where it still resides. Sadly, Brookes died four months before the Games opened.

In all 14 nations took part, all of them European except for the USA. It was the largest international participation of any sporting occasion to date. Events included cycling, wrestling, shooting, fencing and the marathon.

No Women Allowed

Women had not been permitted to participate in the Games but a Greek woman, 30-year-old Stamata Revithi, turned up in the town of Marathon to begin the run. She was not allowed to compete but ran the marathon anyway the next day, and finished in about 5 hours 30 minutes.

Women competed in the Games for the first time at the next Olympics, held in Paris in 1900. Swiss sailor Countess Hélène de Pourtalès was the first woman to win an Olympic gold medal, as the member of a crew in a yacht race. The first woman to win gold as an individual was Charlotte Cooper (see box, page 55).

Various innovations and improvements took place as the Olympics developed. In 1921 it was decided to hold an additional Games in the winter, to host snow and ice sports that could not be undertaken in summer.

Attendance at the Olympics was sometimes an endurance event in itself with long queues for entrance, refreshments and facilities. The IOC worked to insist that if a city was going to host the Olympics, it must have adequate facilities. There was no accounting for the weather, however: at the 1924 Olympics it was so hot that spectators fainted. The temperature for the 10km cross-country run was more than 40 °C, and over half of the 38 contestants failed to finish.

Competitors had to organise their own accommodation until 1932. That year the Los Angeles Games inaugurated the tradition of the Olympic Village, where athletes were housed together.

The Olympics took a grim turn in 1936 when they were held in Berlin under the new Nazi government. The authoritarian and antisemitic regime was shown to be a bad loser when black American athlete Jesse Owens became the star of the Games, winning four gold medals. Chancellor Adolf Hitler refused to shake his hand and when the crowd rose to salute Owens after he won the 200m sprint, he left the stadium.

Jesse Owens runs 200m at the 1936 Games in Berlin

GETTY IMAGES

Competition On A Budget

No Games took place during the Second World War, then the 'austerity Games' were held in London in 1948 with no new buildings. The events were mostly held in Wembley Stadium and the Empire Pool at Wembley Park.

The USA won the most golds, and the greatest number of medals overall. The Soviet Union declined to attend, and Germany and Japan had not been invited. Israel wanted to compete, but had not been recognised as a country yet by the committee.

Some argued that the country should focus on reconstruction after four years of war, not the Games, but in the event they were enjoyed as a national celebration. *Sunday Mirror* reporter Peter Wilson wrote, "After years of austerity it's like a mighty audience brought up on gloomy black and white films and suddenly seeing their first 'talkie' – and finding it's in colour, too. Imagine an emerald cut into an oblong and surrounded by a circlet of rust. That's the Wembley turf, enclosed by the track. Imagine a giant's sugar bowl full of coloured hundreds-and-thousands. That's what the stands look like when they are full."

The tradition of the Olympic flame being brought from Greece originated for the Berlin Games in 1936, and was continued in London. On 17 July 1948 in Olympia a ceremony was held amid the ruins of the temples of Zeus and Hera. The flame was lit by the rays of the sun, concentrated by a mirror, then a Greek athlete carried the torch to Port Katakolon. The flame was taken aboard a Greek destroyer which sailed for Corfu, where the torch was transferred to a British frigate. After a journey across the seas, the torch was carried into Wembley Stadium by a medical

The Italian team at the Olympic Village in Rome before the start of the first Paralympic Games in 1960

student and runner named John Mark. Wilson described the scene: "With a sudden gesture he plunges the Torch downwards to kindle the Olympic Flame… The massed athletes – Danes in crimson, Indians in blue and white, Iraqis in bottle green, Koreans in grey, Pakistanis in leaf green, and representatives of all the fifty-eight competing nations – have not been able to resist the compulsion of cheering on The Runner."

Pioneering Paralympians

July 1948 also saw the first Stoke Mandeville Games held in Buckinghamshire. They were organised by neurologist Ludwig Guttmann, who ran the National Spinal Injuries Centre at Stoke Mandeville Hospital and wanted to promote the rehabilitation of soldiers. Following subsequent successful Games, in 1960 he took 400 athletes to the Olympic Games in Rome for a 'Parallel Olympics' with disabled people. Since then, Paralympics have been held in every Olympic year.

The 1960 Games in Rome were also the first to have worldwide TV coverage. However, this also increased the appetite for controversies such as when a Danish cyclist died after taking a performance-enhancing drug. In 1968 in Mexico competitors gave the black-power salute on the podium as a gesture towards the civil-rights campaign in the USA. Four years later the Olympic Village at the Munich Games was invaded by eight armed Palestinian militants, who killed two members of the Israeli team and took nine others hostage. In a rescue attempt all of the hostages and one policeman were killed, as were five of the terrorists.

The Olympic Village was invaded by eight armed Palestinian militants

Thankfully, such events have been rare in the history of the modern Olympics. The enduring sentiment is of the amateur competitive spirit, expressed in the words of Baron de Coubertin himself: "The important thing in the Olympic Games is not winning but taking part. The essential thing in life is not conquering but fighting well."

JAD ADAMS is a historian and author. His latest non-fiction book is *Decadent Women: Yellow Book Lives* (Reaktion, 2023)

Resources

Take your research further

BOOKS

Fast Girls
Elise Hooper
HarperCollins, 2020
This fact-based novel tells the story of three American female athletes at the 1936 Olympics.

The Games
David Goldblatt
Macmillan, 2016
This history of the Olympics since the 19th century can be borrowed from the Internet Archive for free via **tinyurl.com/arch-gold-gam**.

MUSEUM

MUCH WENLOCK MUSEUM
a **The Square, High Street, Much Wenlock TF13 6HR**
t 01743 258885
e *shropshiremuseums@shropshire.gov.uk*
w **shropshiremuseums.org.uk/much-wenlock-museum**
Olympic artefacts are on show.

WEBSITES

INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE
w **olympics.com/ioc/history**
The IOC's site has a section on the history of the Games.

OLYMPIC MUSEUM
w **olympics.com/museum/explore/virtual-360-tours**
The museum is in Lausanne in Switzerland, but you can take virtual tours online.

OLYMPIC RESULTS
w **tinyurl.com/oly-results**
The IOC's website also has the results and medallists' names for every event since 1896.

WENLOCK OLYMPIAN SOCIETY
w **wenlock-olympian-society.org.uk**
Find out about the Olympian Trail around Much Wenlock.

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'We Found A Centenarian In Our Family Tree'

CELEBRATING YOUR DISCOVERIES

Barbara Greenwood and her family made a remarkable discovery about her great great grandfather. They have come together to pay a loving tribute to him, as **Gail Dixon** explains

John Major Green was born in 1815, when people lived by candlelight and travelled mostly by horse and cart. Jane Austen's novel *Emma* was published that year, the Prince Regent was on the throne and the Napoleonic Wars were still raging. Life expectancy in Britain was only 41, due to disease, poverty and lack of sanitation. Despite such challenges, John reached the age of 100 and was Middlesbrough's oldest known resident.

Barbara Greenwood, John's great great granddaughter, and her family have joined forces to pay tribute to this amazing man.

BARBARA GREENWOOD is a retired health and safety officer who lives in Billingham, County Durham. She has been researching her tree for 12 years

Incredible Longevity

My niece Elizabeth Hails sparked my interest in genealogy. In 2010, she joined Ancestry (**ancestry.co.uk**) and found connections to the village of Hunmanby, near Scarborough in North Yorkshire. My maiden name was Green, and I was amazed to discover that my great great grandfather John Green lived to be 100. He was born in Hunmanby on 16 April 1815, to George and Milcah Green. They were a farming family, and the couple had 10 children in all.

Due to John's remarkable longevity, there were several newspaper articles about him online and these celebrated his long career. He began work as a labourer on the railways, then became the first employee of Sadler and Company Ltd's gasworks in Middlesbrough.

During the 19th century, large ironstone deposits were found in the Eston Hills near Middlesbrough. As a result, an extensive mining and metalworking industry burgeoned in the region. John joined the tide of workers flooding in, and witnessed Middlesbrough's rapid transformation from a farming area into a city that would be dubbed 'Ironopolis'.

In 1859, John married Jane Willis of Darlington at St Hilda's Church, Middlesbrough. They had three children: William, John and Thomas, who became my great grandfather.

Astonishingly, John worked until the age of 92, which was highlighted in the newspaper articles. By the 1891 census, he was listed as a "cab proprietor, employer", which he continued to do until he finally retired in 1907. In total, he worked for an incredible 75 years.

John passed away on 26 November 1915, and was buried at Linthorpe Cemetery, Middlesbrough. Before he died, he was reputed to be the town's oldest living inhabitant.

A Time Of Change

It's amazing to think of the dramatic technological changes that John would have witnessed during his long lifetime. These would have included the development of electricity, motorised transport, radio, photography and the telephone.

A number of newspapers, including *The Scotsman*, published obituaries paying

Tracing An Ancestor's Burial Location

These online resources may help you track down a relation's resting place

Deceased Online

w **deceasedonline.com**

This company works with crematoria across the UK to digitise their records and host them online. The database is free to search, but viewing records requires payment.

Find A Grave

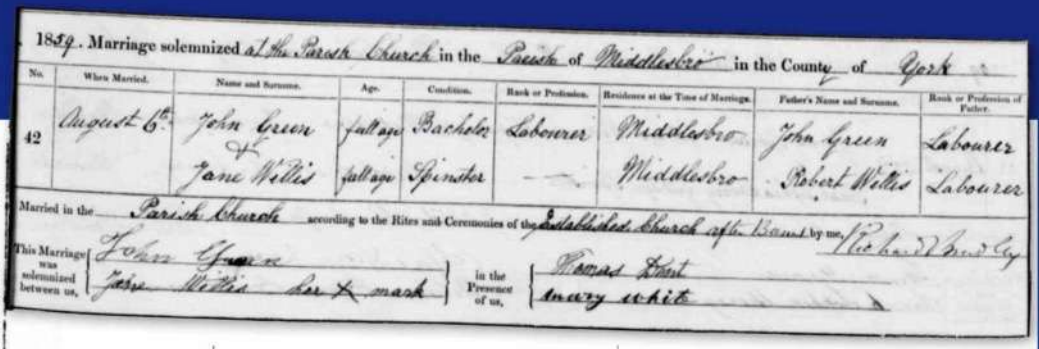
w **findagrave.com**

The world's largest online database of grave sites lists more than 238 million memorials, often with photographs and inscriptions transcribed by volunteers across continents.

Findmypast

w **bit.ly/fmp-nbi**

This collection contains details of more than 17 million burial records. The site also has Scotland and Ireland cemetery indexes from BillionGraves (**billiongraves.com**).



1859. Marriage solemnized at the Parish Church in the Parish of Middlesbro in the County of York

No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.	Residence at the Time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
42	August 6th	John Green & Jane Willis	full age full age	Bachelor Spinster	Labourer —	Middlesbro Middlesbro	John Green Robert Willis	Labourer Labourer

Married in the Parish Church according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church after Banns by me, Richard Bradley

This Marriage was solemnized between us, John Green, Jane Willis her X mark in the Presence of us, Thomas Dent, Mary White

John was 44 when he married Jane Willis in 1859, who was only 23

A CIVIC VETERAN.

TALK WITH THE OLDEST MAN IN MIDDLESBROUGH.

When Mr John Swinbank, of 434, St. Cuthbert's-terrace, Newport-road, Middlesbrough, celebrated his 97th birthday, in February last, it was thought that he would be the oldest inhabitant of the town, but apparently this is not the case, there being an older claimant to the title—namely, Mr John Major Green, of 38, Schoolcroft, Middlesbrough, who completes his 98th year to-day.

Mr Green, who is a native of Hunmanby, a small Yorkshire town, a few miles from Filey, has lived in Middlesbrough close upon 60 years, although he knew the town before that, having worked at various places in the district before eventually settling down in Middlesbrough.

He married at St. Hilda's Church in 1855, and his wife is still alive, the old couple having celebrated their golden wedding nearly four years ago, and both enjoy fairly good health. Mr Green is able to walk about yet, and, with the exception of the fact that his eyesight is failing, is possessed of all his faculties.

He can recall many incidents of the early life of Middlesbrough, and to a "North-Eastern Daily Gazette" representative, the other day, told of his coming to Middlesbrough when there were only a very few houses in the Durham-street and Commercial-street area.

The site of the present station was then nothing but green fields belonging to a farm which stood at the junction of Corporation and Marton Roads.

Speaking of the commencement of the industrial activity of the town, he said when he was a young man the works of Messrs Bolckow, Vaughan, and Co. were only a very small concern, and were run by one engine, which barked like a bull-dog, and could be heard miles away.

In those days the wages paid were nothing like as high as at present, and in order to make a living wage when he worked at Gilkes's works he, to use his own words, "worked three weeks every fortnight that came," by which he meant, he hastened to explain, that he worked so much overtime as to bring him three weeks pay every fortnight.

Continuing, he remarked that he had worked up to the ripe old age of 92, showing how remarkably well he has staved off the ravages of times, and how thoroughly he has earned his retirement.

The old gentleman has three sons, two of whom are married, 14 grand-children, and seven great grand-children.

MR JOHN GREEN,
Oldest Man in Middlesbrough.

HAVE YOU BROKEN THROUGH A BRICK WALL?

Share your family story with us and you could appear in the magazine!

Please write to us at the address on page 6 or email *wdytyaeditorial@ourmedia.co.uk*

tribute to John. *The Newcastle Daily Journal* stated that he still enjoyed good health until just before his death, when he suffered badly from rheumatism.

It was at this point that I discovered that John lay in an unmarked grave, which was so terribly sad. I used to visit Linthorpe Cemetery with my granddaughter Kelsie, who also loves genealogy, and worry that he would be forgotten.

Other members of the family became fascinated with John's life, and in 2023 we decided to erect a headstone in his honour. I contacted Middlesbrough Council's Bereavement Services (see **tinyurl.com/middlesbrough-bereavement**), and the council's cemeteries and crematorium assistant Janine Lewis guided me through the process, which took around six months.

In order to apply to have a headstone erected on the plot, I had to become John's next of kin and fill in an indemnity form. A month later, we got the go-ahead to liaise with a stonemason.

I did this via Rose Funeral Services in Middlesbrough (**rosefunerals.co.uk**), whose owner Jamie Thomson and supervisor Stephen Toogood also supported me on this journey. On telling them John's life story they became intrigued, and offered a generous discount on the headstone.

Jamie does so much for the local community restoring old gravestones free of charge.

I posted a message on our Green Family group on Facebook (**facebook.com**), and relatives kindly donated towards the cost. My cousin Nichola Green helped to organise everything and choose the headstone.

We discovered that John's wife Jane died in 1916, and was buried alongside him. Their grandson Joseph Henry Green, my grandfather, who died in 1945, also laid in the unmarked grave. We wanted to pay tribute to all three of them.

Moving Moment

On 9 December 2023, the headstone was put in place, and 15 members of the family gathered to watch and say a few words. It was a very emotional event; I thought of John's family standing at that same spot in 1915 and it gave me goosebumps.

I felt so proud of John. He deserved this respect, and it was important to us that his resting place was recognised.

It's good to know that he will be remembered by future generations to come. The Green family have a lot to thank John for.

Left: John's photo appeared in a local newspaper in 1913 Below: the family stand behind his new gravestone

Reader Tips

Barbara shares her advice for marking an ancestor's grave

- Online records can help you locate the cemetery (see the box opposite).
- The local council's cemeteries office can grant legal permission, and hold grave records that can provide the precise location.
- A reputable funeral-service company can guide you through the process.

The Play's The Thing

Rosemary Collins learns of a heritage project creating an online database from the records of a Newcastle theatre

Clockwise from top: the Heritage Alliance's Dr Ingrid Samuel *(far left)* hands a Heritage Heroes award to Rachel Snape and volunteer Charmian Marshall; a script book; and a programme

Newcastle's Grade I-listed Tyne Theatre & Opera House (TT&OH; **tynetheatreandoperahouse.uk**) opened in 1867. It became a cinema in 1919 until it was converted back into a theatre, reopening in 1974. In 2022, the TT&OH received a £242,000 grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund for a 12-month project 'The Drury Lane of the North'. One strand of the project involved restoring historic stage machinery, and another was creating a database of every performance during its first incarnation as a theatre.

"We've got this amazing unique Victorian stage machinery, which is one of the only working modular stage machineries in Europe," reveals Rachel Snape, Heritage and Development Project Manager at the TT&OH. "So one of the things we wanted to do was to build a database of the productions at the theatre in order to understand what that machinery was used for. But also just out of interest, really, in terms of the history of the building.

We wanted to build a database of the productions at the theatre

"We were really lucky because Dr Andrew Shail, a senior lecturer in film at Newcastle University, had done a lot of the preparatory work over the summer of 2022. He visited the City Library with some of his students and interns, and digitised vast numbers of newspaper adverts and the programmes that were in the city archives. They were uploaded onto our computers, so the volunteers for our project were able to look at them."

A team of 45–50 volunteers collaborated to create the database. Each of them worked on at least one year of the period, reviewing the records until they had a complete database of at least 3,500 performances that took place between 23 September 1867 and 1 March 1919.

The database, which is freely available online at **tynetheatreandoperahouse.uk/about/%20performance-calendar-database/**, can be searched by date, type of performer or genre of entertainment – which includes some splendid descriptions such as "Aquatic entertainment", "Burlesque lectures" and "Fairy morality". It also shows famous actors of the day such as Henry Irving (1838–1905) and Ellen Terry (1847–1928) performing at the theatre.

"I've got an interest in the *Titanic*," says volunteer Lucy Swanston, "and one of the years I focused on was 1912, the year that it sank. A few *Titanic* links popped up, so that was really interesting. For example, there was a concert at the theatre that raised money for the families of the ship's musicians. In the First World War years as well, there were talks about the war. People basically had to come to the theatre back then to find out the news."

The group of volunteers behind the database won a Heritage Heroes award in March for their efforts, and they were so interested in the research that they wanted to carry on. So the work, and therefore the database, has been extended to cover the period when the theatre operated as a cinema.

"It's brought in a new load of volunteers who are interested in silent film and film history. So they're now piecing together the years from 1919 to 1972, and we're at about 1955 at the moment."

Rachel adds that some of the volunteers recently made an intriguing discovery…

"A couple of weeks ago they were stripping some wallpaper off one of our rooms, and behind it was some lettering imprinted on the wall," she says. "The text had transferred from film posters that had been used as lining paper in the 1930s, and because of the work that the database volunteers have done, we've been able to cross-reference the lettering and identify the films concerned."

TELL YOUR STORY

Share your local history project with us and you could appear in the magazine!

Please write to us at the address on page 6 or email *rosemary.collins@ourmedia.co.uk*

Find Out More

Tyne Theatre & Opera House
w **tynetheatreandoperahouse.uk**

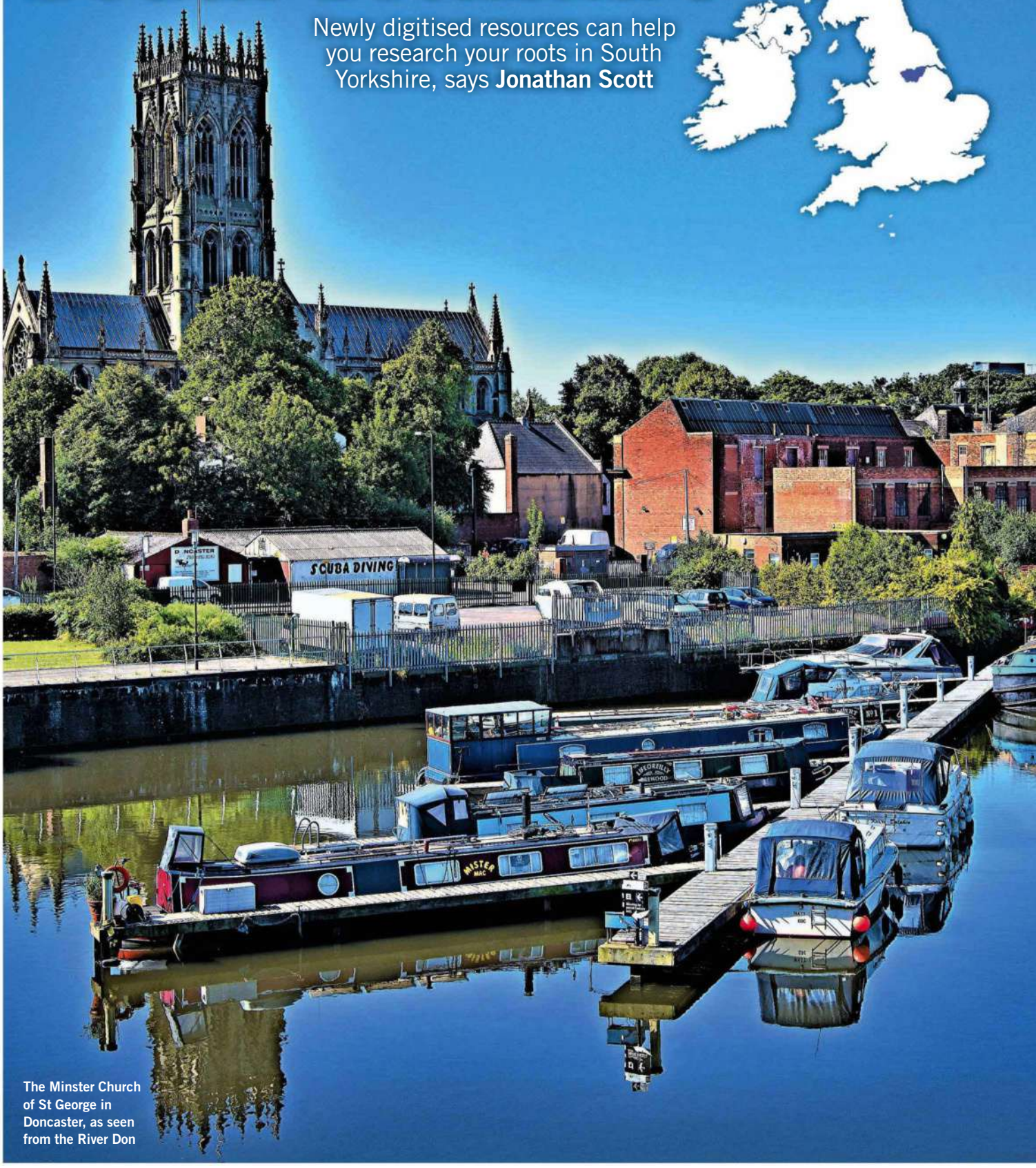
The online database is located at **tynetheatreandoperahouse.uk/about/%20performance-calendar-database/**. If you own any historic programmes or production images from the theatre, please let Rachel known by emailing *rachel.snape@ttoh.uk*.

HERITAGE ALLIANCE/BARNEY NEWMAN / TT&OH

Around Britain

South Yorkshire

Newly digitised resources can help you research your roots in South Yorkshire, says **Jonathan Scott**



The Minster Church of St George in Doncaster, as seen from the River Don

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Workers at Brook Motors' factory in Barnsley, photographed on 18 June 1955

Yorkshire's ancient subdivisions are known as Ridings. East Riding is the smallest of the three, while North Riding extends from the Pennines to the North Sea, and West Riding – the largest – is home to the industrialised cities of Leeds and Sheffield. The modern county of South Yorkshire, created in 1974, is made up of four metropolitan boroughs – Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield – all of which were historically within West Riding.

We visited archives from the four districts, finding a variety of projects and digitisations coming to fruition. A team from Ancestry (**ancestry.co.uk**) has been busy in Barnsley, for example.

"We've been working with Ancestry to get a huge tranche of material photographed," says Paul Stebbing, Barnsley's archives and local studies manager (**experience-barnsley.com/our-archives**). "It won't be online for several months, but indexing is under way."

We've been working with Ancestry to get a huge tranche of material photographed

The main dataset will be the Barnsley Nonconformist Collection. This includes baptism and marriage registers from the Barnsley Wesleyan Methodist Circuit, Barnsley Primitive Methodist Circuit, Hoyland Primitive Methodist Circuit, 82 individual Methodist chapels, seven Wesleyan Reform Union chapels, seven Congregational chapels and two Baptist chapels.

"The covered dates are predominantly the 19th and 20th centuries, but the records of the Netherfield Congregational Chapel at Penistone go back to the 18th century. Included are the registers of many chapels that are long gone, such as the Welsh Methodist Chapel at Carlton"

In addition, Ancestry has been photographing registers from the Barnsley Borough Petty Sessions Court and the Staincross Petty Sessions Court dating from the 19th and early 20th centuries.

"Many of the original registers are in a poor condition, so this will allow us to make the contents accessible, while protecting the fragile originals. They're a very useful source for investigating criminal ancestors."

Doncaster was granted city status in 2022. An Ancestry team has also been visiting the borough collections (**heritagedoncaster.org.uk/archives**), digitising parish records up to the middle of the 20th century. However, the most significant news here since our last visit in 2020 has been the opening of new premises in January 2023.

Moving On Up

Archivist Jess Hogg says, "The previous site in the suburb of Balby was deemed unfit and a new, more central location was

South Yorkshire Through The Ages

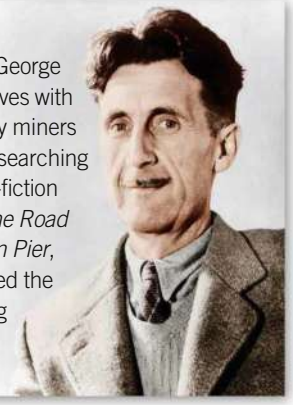
Historical highlights from the region

1249
A royal charter allows Barnsley to hold a weekly market on Wednesdays and an annual four-day fair at Michaelmas.

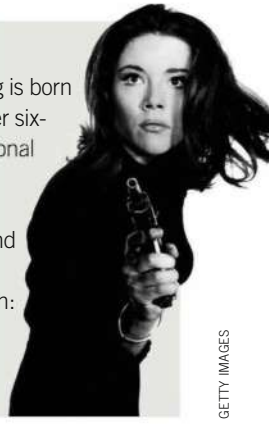
c1475
What will become known as the Old Queen's Head pub is built at Pond Hill, Sheffield. The building was Grade II-listed in 1952.

1743
Sheffield cutler Thomas Boulsover accidentally fuses copper and silver, and discovers that the resulting material Sheffield Plate can be used as a less expensive substitute for solid silver.

1936
Author George Orwell lives with Barnsley miners while researching his non-fiction book *The Road to Wigan Pier*, published the following year.



1938
Actor Diana Rigg is born in Doncaster. Her six-decade professional career includes many acclaimed roles on stage and screen, not least her breakthrough: Emma Peel in *The Avengers* (1965–1968).



GETTY IMAGES

sought. Doncaster Museum on Chequer Road had recently closed in preparation for its move into the newly built Danum Gallery, Library and Museum, and it was decided that the Chequer Road site would be perfect for us. Work began to renovate the old ground-floor galleries and foyer to create a strongroom and accessible research area for the public."

Recent acquisitions include the remainder of the records of Priory Place Methodist Church, which closed in 2023, and this summer the archive is taking in records of Doncaster Grammar School. Staff are also working on making collections more accessible, and hope to move catalogues online in the near future, and add indexes.

One significant business collection here is the employee registers of the massive Great Northern Railway Works, which was a major local employer. The archive also holds records from such companies as the brass foundry Pegler Brothers and Co. and Bridon Ropery, as well as smaller concerns such as ironmongers Wild & Sykes and the Arcadia Cinema.

"Not all of these contain records relating to employees," Jess warns, "so please ask us before making an appointment."

The same could be said of the archives for Rotherham, which are housed at Clifton Park Museum (**www.rotherham.gov.uk/leisure-culture/archives-local-history**).

"We have a few industrial collections," says supervisor Laura Gardine. "Steel and coal were major influences of course, but our coal records are not necessarily name-heavy – they tend to be more business-related, much to people's disappointment.

"An interesting collection relates to the Guest and Chrimes brass works – the company that invented the screw-down tap. You can view what the collection holds via our catalogue at **archives.rotherham.gov.uk/calmview**."

Alongside Rotherham's local-authority archives, staff also look after the York and Lancaster Regimental collection, and have recently been working with the Army Museums Ogilby Trust (**armymuseums.org.uk**) to digitise First World War material. "The ▶

Free Online Records

This month's round-up comprises historic newspapers, a First World War roll of honour, parish registers, a database of cutlers, directories and Sheffield indexes

Cutlers Database
w **hawleysheffield knives.com**

The site Is Your Name On A Knife? provides a synopsis of many Sheffield cutlery firms – makers of knives, edge tools, scissors, silver and tableware.

Parish Registers
w **tinyurl.com/fs-yk-pr**

On FamilySearch 'England, Yorkshire, Parish Registers, 1538–2016' includes baptisms, banns, marriages and burials.

Historic Newspapers
w **tinyurl.com/bna-sheff-adv**

The British Newspaper Archive has issues of the *Sheffield Public Advertiser* available for free (1760–1793) provided you create a free user account.

Directories
w **tinyurl.com/sco-dir-yorks**

The West Riding directories on the University of Leicester's website Special Collections Online cover modern South Yorkshire.

Sheffield Indexes
w **sheffield indexers.com**

Here you can search transcribed sources relating to Sheffield and its surroundings.

First World War Roll Of Honour
w **tinyurl.com/sheff-gov-hon**

Sheffield Council's research guide to the First World War includes a link to this roll of honour, initially compiled after the conflict ended as a tribute to the city's dead.

1969

Ken Loach's film *Kes* is set and filmed in several villages around Barnsley. The cast includes local actors Brian Glover and Freddie Fletcher, although the lead role is played by David Bradley *(pictured)* from York.

1980

Doncaster-born presenter and journalist Jeremy Clarkson begins his career at the *Rotherham Advertiser*.

2007

Brazilian football legend Pelé visits Sheffield during celebrations for the 150th anniversary of Sheffield FC, the world's oldest club still playing football.

2016

The centenary of the first day of the Battle of the Somme on 1 July 1916, when some 300 Barnsley men lost their lives, is commemorated by new artwork in the Town Hall Gardens. *Light Lines* uses images of the soldiers as laser-etched illuminations.

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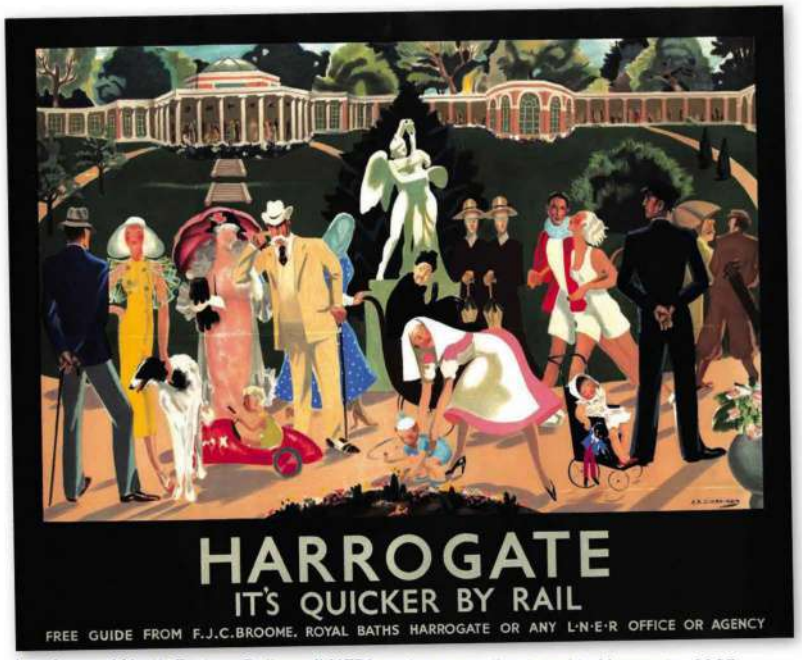


London and North Eastern Railway (LNER) poster promoting travel to Harrogate, 1935

▶ project digitised all our records from the conflict, and they are online for the first time at the site **theogilbymuster.com**."

Sheffield City Archives (**sheffield.gov.uk/libraries-archives/access-archives-local-studies-library**) is in the process of cataloguing papers of the Sheffield United Synagogue and the Sheffield Jewish Congregation and Centre. This includes burial records, records of the first synagogue in Sheffield and papers from Jewish families. Archivist Pete Evans says that the online catalogue should be ready to consult in early 2025.

Staff have also been working with members of Sheffield & District Family History Society (**sheffieldfhs.org.uk**), who, in memory of its founder Prof. David Hey, have funded the digitisation of two unique collections of maps and plans. The Fairbank and Arundel Castle Manuscripts Collections are being uploaded to Picture Sheffield (**picturesheffield.com**), which already has more than 100,000 images held by Sheffield City Archives and Local Studies Library. Pete says, "We are including the names of tenants, landowners, fields and properties in the catalogue entries."

WATCH OUT!
Some parts of modern Sheffield, such as Mosborough, Norton, Dore and Totley, were once in Derbyshire, so search the record office's catalogue at **calmview.derbyshire.gov.uk**.

Society member Anne Giller adds that they're about to sponsor the digitisation of admissions books from the South Yorkshire Asylum. They've also transcribed and indexed baptisms from All Saints, Brightside (1837–1923), and St Margaret's Church, Brightside (1918–1978); baptisms (1856–1940) and marriages (1867–1940) from St Simon's Church on Eyre Street; and baptisms from St Michael's and All Angels Church, Neepsend (1868–1942). All the material has been submitted to Findmypast.

Finally Sheffield City Archives holds countless parish Poor Law records, including settlement and removal records, plus bastardy examinations and orders. Some of this material is indexed and available on Findmypast in the collection 'Yorkshire, Sheffield Social and Institutional Records 1558–1939': **bit.ly/fmp-shf-soc.**

LOCAL INDUSTRY

GLASS You may be in luck if your ancestor worked in glass manufacturing in Rotherham

A photograph of Beatson Clark's glassworks published in 1923

Beatson Clark was founded in 1751 as a glassworks beside the canal in Rotherham, initially manufacturing containers for the pharmaceutical industry before branching out into the food and beverages market too. The firm is still based in the market town today, employing some 380 people. Rotherham Archives holds personnel records including apprenticeship indentures, wages books, photos and records of staff associations. You can find out more via the online catalogue at **archives.rotherham.gov.uk/CalmView**.

SOUTH YORKSHIRE SURNAMES

Are any of these in your family tree?

DENTON
This locative name comes from West Riding.

HARDCASTLE
Hardcastle is also a locative name from West Riding, specifically Hardcastle in Bewerley.

HINCHLIFF(E)
There are several Yorkshire surnames that share the root 'Hinch'.

HOBSON
This patronymic surname originated in the personal name Hobb.

LONGBOTTOM
Longbottom is a topographic name for someone who lived in a long valley.

OXLEE/OXLEY
This name might come from Ox Lee in Hepworth.

PARKIN
Nearly 400 Parkins were recorded living in Sheffield at the time of the 1881 census.

RUSHFORTH
Just under 1,000 Rushforths were living in Yorkshire in 1881.

STANIFORTH
This name is particularly common near Sheffield, and derives from the Old English for a stony ford.

WILBURN
The surname Wilburn is thought to derive from Welbourn in Lincolnshire.

GETTY IMAGES / INTERNET ARCHIVE

SOUTH YORKSHIRE DIRECTORY

ARCHIVES AND LIBRARIES

Barnsley Archives And Local Studies

a **Experience Barnsley Museum and Discovery Centre, Town Hall, Church Street, Barnsley S70 2TA**
t 01226 773950
e *archives@barnsley.gov.uk*
w **experience-barnsley.com**
The archive looks after material from across the Metropolitan Borough of Barnsley, stretching back to the 12th century. The website has a number of useful guides to local resources, including school collections, nonconformist records and more recent history such as Women Against Pit Closures, a group that formed in 1984 during the Miners' Strike: **experience-barnsley.com/our-archives/collections/guides**.

City Of Doncaster Archives

a **Chequer Road, Doncaster DN1 2AE**
t 01302 734307
e *archives@doncaster.gov.uk*
w **heritagedoncaster.org.uk/archives**
Collections here include registers from the 90-plus parishes of the Archdeaconry of Doncaster, Doncaster borough charters (1194–1836), electoral registers and local newspapers dating back to 1786.

Rotherham Archives And Local Studies Service

a **Clifton Park Museum, Clifton Lane, Rotherham S65 2AA**
t 01709 336633
e *archives@rotherham.gov.uk*
w **www.rotherham.gov.uk/leisure-culture/archives-local-history**
Here you can access minute books, ledgers, departmental records and plans of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council and predecessor authorities dating back to 1328. There are also diaries, printed ephemera, oral histories and photographs relating to local organisations, families, businesses, schools, charities and nonconformist churches. You can search collections via the online catalogue (**archives.rotherham.gov.uk/calmview**).

Sheffield City Archives And Local Studies Library

a **1st Floor, Central Library, Surrey Street, Sheffield S1 1XZ**
t 0114 203 9395/ 0114 273 4753
e *archives@sheffield.gov.uk*
w **sheffield.gov.uk/archives**
The local-studies and city archival material are located in separate buildings, so you should always contact the team in advance of a visit. Together the collections include parish registers for the Sheffield area (also available via Findmypast; **findmypast.co.uk**), nonconformist records, material relating to the iron and steel industries, school records, newspapers and electoral registers. The website includes various name indexes and research guides (**sheffield.gov.uk/libraries-archives/access-archives-local-studies-library/research-guides**).

West Yorkshire Archive Service

a **West Yorkshire History Centre, 127 Kirkgate, Wakefield WF1 1JG**
t 0113 535 3040
e *wakefield@wyjs.org.uk*
w **tinyurl.com/wyas-wake**
The service's Wakefield branch has some county-wide resources that cover parts of what is now South Yorkshire.

GROUPS & SOCIETIES

Barnsley Family History Society

w **barnsleyfhs.co.uk**
The society has compiled transcription data from all kinds of sources including parish records, census returns, local newspapers and nonconformist records. The society offers a search service (£2 per search for non-members).

Doncaster And District Family History Society

w **doncasterfhs.co.uk**
Non-members can trawl a stripped-back version of a combined database of all of the material transcribed by the society since 1980 – more than 1.6 million records – then join to see the full result.

Sheffield & District Family History Society

w **sheffieldfhs.org.uk**
The family history society's website includes a research guide to topics such as Sheffield's nonconformist registers, although some are for members only.

MUSEUMS

Danum Gallery, Library And Museum

a **Waterdale, Doncaster DN1 3BZ**
t 01302 737555
e *collectionenquiries@doncaster.gov.uk*
w **dglam.org.uk**
This museum opened to the public in 2021. It is also home to the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry Regimental Museum and the Rail Heritage Centre.

Sheffield Museums Trust

a **Leader House, Surrey Street, Sheffield S1 2LH**
t 0114 278 2600
e *info@sheffieldmuseums.org.uk*
w **sheffieldmuseums.org.uk**
This independent charity operates six heritage sites: Abbeydale Industrial Hamlet, Graves Gallery, Kelham Island Museum, Millennium Gallery, Shepherd Wheel Workshop and Weston Park Museum.

WEBSITES

Ancestry

w **bit.ly/anc-yorks**
Through an ongoing partnership with West Yorkshire Archive Service, Ancestry has land-tax records following the 1910 Finance Act, in addition to electoral registers and many millions of parish registers.

Findmypast

w **bit.ly/fmp-yorks-coll**
The enormous Yorkshire Collection on Findmypast draws on material from six archives – Borthwick Institute for Archives at the University of York, City of Doncaster Archives, East Riding of Yorkshire Council, North Yorkshire County Council, Sheffield City Archives and Local Studies Library, and Teesside Archives – together with data compiled by societies.

Book of emigrants' letters, 1857–1874

Jane Lewis of the Surrey History Centre shares a book from the archives of a philanthropic school

Interview By Rosemary Collins

The Philanthropic Society, later the Royal Philanthropic Society (RPS), was founded in London in 1788 to provide aid to homeless children in the city. In 1849 the society opened a Farm School at Redhill in Surrey, where orphaned boys or juvenile criminals lived while learning farm work and other trades. When the children became teenagers, the society sponsored many of them to emigrate. The Surrey History Centre in Woking holds the society's records including a book of letters from emigrant ex-pupils, as Jane Lewis, the centre's genealogist, explains.

What Is The Book?

The book of emigration letters from the Royal Philanthropic Farm School in Redhill, Surrey, contains edited transcripts of letters from boys who were encouraged to emigrate to places including Australia (Sydney, New South Wales; Adelaide; Victoria; Van Diemen's Land, now Tasmania; and Western Australia); the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa; Canada West and New Brunswick in Canada; New York in the USA; and New Zealand and India.

It also includes letters from their employers and the society's agents abroad, classified by colony and indexed by correspondent.

What Does The Book Of Letters Reveal?

The letters show the boys' daily lives, generally their day-to-day work and meeting other emigrants, and often make reference to other boys in the same area. However, on occasion, they also mention historical events. For example, one of the Canadian letters talks of the "war in the States" – the American Civil War (1861–1865) – when boys were offered high wages to go and fight.

Rarely are we able to hear stories from the least fortunate in society

The letter book and other records in the RPS collection reflect the mission of the society, which was to rehabilitate boys who had often fallen into a life of crime or were felt to be simply living in the type of environment where they might get involved with the wrong crowd.

It was believed that a new start in a relatively new country would be the best way of giving the boys a second chance in life, and an opportunity for them to better themselves.

It is important to remember that these letters were probably chosen for the positive aspects of the emigrants' lives that they portray. The original letters were sadly destroyed after the edited highlights were copied into the letter book. Although there are some references to the hardships of their lives, very few negative comments are included. However, we've recently found full copies of many of the featured letters in the annual reports of the RPS, so we're excited to research them further.

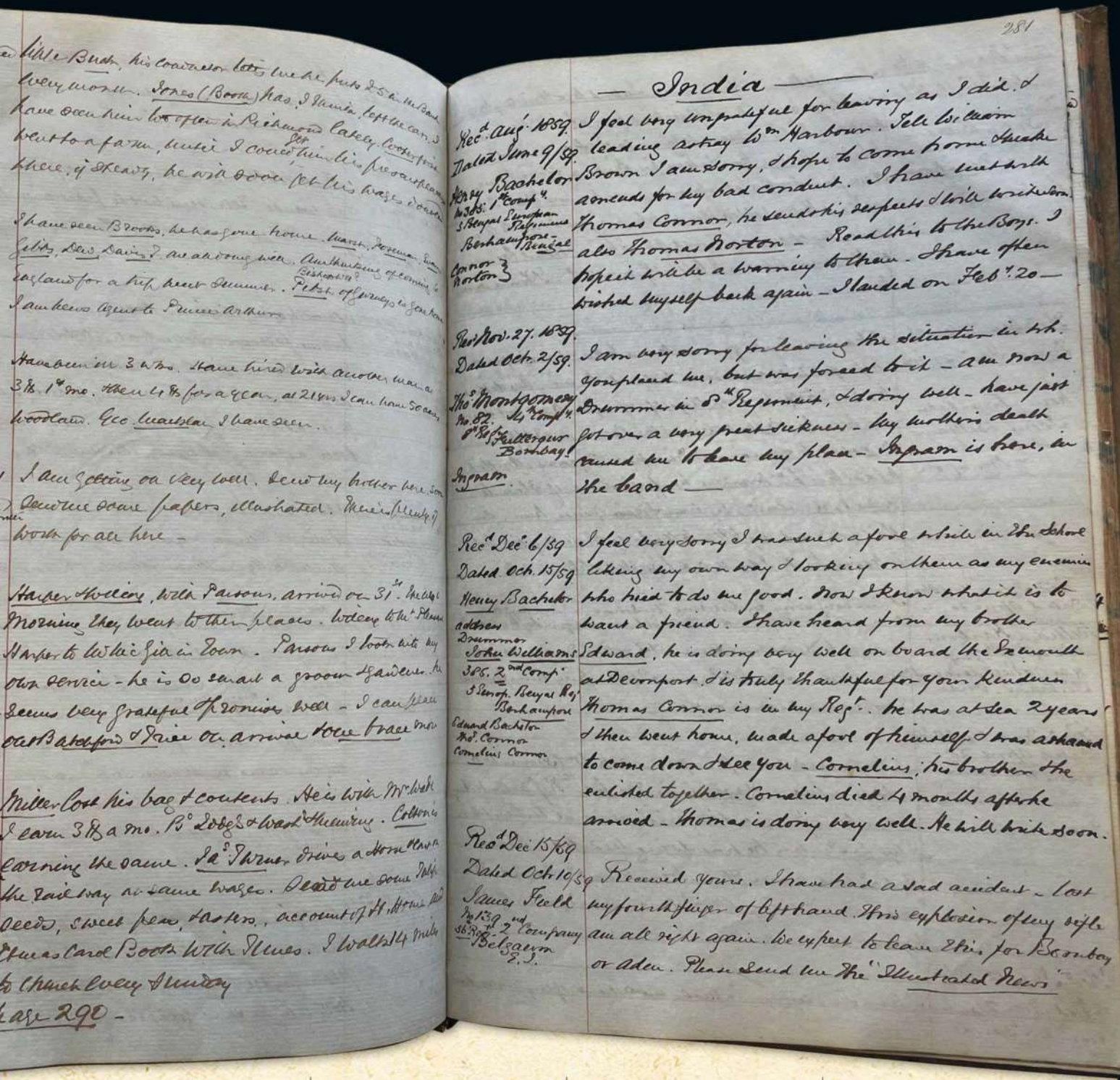
In one letter Martin Fenning, writing from New York in 1857, says, "Am getting on well with my trade and can now make a wage. My master is helping me greatly. The Yankees are smart men and expect you to be smart too as it is of no use for a boy to come here unless he means to work."

Some of the boys struggle

Visit Us

Surrey History Centre
a 130 Goldsworth Road, Woking GU21 6ND
t 01483 518737
e *shs@surreycc.gov.uk*
w **surreycc.gov.uk/culture-and-leisure/history-centre/visit**

The centre is open Tuesday to Thursday, 9.30am–12.45pm and 1.45pm–5pm, and on the second Saturday of the month, 9.30am–1pm and 1.45pm–4.15pm. Advance booking is recommended at least two working days before your visit.



with the unfamiliar climate – Robert Herod writes from West Canada in 1857, "I now know what *cold* really is: but winter is very pleasant you see the sleighs running and hear the horses' bells."

Some of the Australian writers allude to the country's gold mines, but they don't seem to make their fortune there. For example, JH Hobbs writes from Ballarat, Victoria, in 1856, "Had saved £17 and in 5 days augmented my stock to £20 by hawking oranges. Then took Eales into partnership and went gold-digging for ten weeks at the end of which time the £20 was gone."

Why Did You Choose It?

I'm a very greedy family historian. I want *everything*. I don't just want to know when people were born, married and died – I want to know how they lived, and what their lives were like, and what sort of people they were. While the census, parish registers etc can give us some factual information about our families, there are other sources which I call 'window' records that provide us with a glimpse into the lives or our ancestors. Rarely are we able to hear the stories and accounts of daily life from the least fortunate in society at a time when they were making their way in the world, so records like this book provide us with that window to the past.

Also, the letters cited in the letter book have been invaluable for residents of Canada and Australia trying to trace their ancestors.

What Other Collections Do You Hold?

As a county record office, Surrey History Centre holds records that reflect the history and administration of the county of Surrey, such as parish records, Poor Law records, electoral registers, maps, local directories, hospital records, court records etc. There are links to online family history resources at **surreycc.gov.uk/culture-and-leisure/history-centre/links**. We also have more records of the Redhill school including the Registers of Admissions, which are indexed at **tinyurl.com/surreycc-redhill-adm-pdf**. We have just received a very generous donation from East Surrey Family History Society (**eastsurreyfhs.org.uk**) which has enabled us to buy a high-resolution digital camera and new lenses, and also to pay for staff time to undertake the digitisation of the admission registers.

REVIEWS

The latest books on history and genealogy, plus apps, podcasts and websites

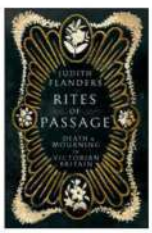
Henry Peach Robinson's composite photograph *Fading Away* (1858) proved hugely popular

ROYAL PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY/SCIENCE & SOCIETY PICTURE LIBRARY

Rites Of Passage

Death & Mourning In Victorian Britain

Judith Flanders
Picador, 352 pages, £25



Sickness, death and mourning were much more constant in the lives of our 19th-century ancestors than our own. In her new book Judith Flanders ponders the extent to which children watched their brothers, sisters and the adults in the family die. She describes such tragedies as that of the Tait family in 1856, who lost five children in just over four weeks.

With medicine ineffective against most serious conditions, families were often reduced to crude folk remedies, such as cutting off the hair of a person approaching death because it was believed that shorter hair relieved pressure on the brain.

With such limited curative power, deathbed culture concentrated on securing a 'good death', which was considered to be a pious one. This could be taken to extremes, such as the theological suggestion that some children are taken early by God to save them from insufficiently pious parents. Some children, it was opined, "like to die".

After death came the mourning rituals – mirrors covered or turned to the wall, yards of crêpe for mourning gowns, and hair from the corpse used for funerary rings. Your middle-class forebears will have known the right number and size of black borders to have on their mourning stationery depending on whether the deceased was a daughter, a spouse or a brother-in-law.

This excellent tour through the macabre world of 19th-century death takes in all the details, from black ostrich feathers to winding sheets and overcrowded graveyards. The high points are the long widowhood of Queen Victoria and the grotesquely extravagant funeral of the Duke of Wellington, including a hearse 27 feet long, 10 feet wide and 17 feet high that broke down on its way to St Paul's.

Jad Adams **is a historian who reveals the development of the modern Olympics on page 52**

DIGITAL PICKS

Rosemary Collins highlights three digital resources that caught our eye this month

WEBSITE

Norfolk Record Office

norfolkrecordofficeblog.org/snapshots-from-the-archives

The record office's blog includes entries on fascinating documents in its archives, from the medieval Great Yarmouth Borough court rolls to the diary of an elderly local woman during the Second World War, as well as useful advice on family history research and 'Behind the Scenes' posts revealing how the record office is run. Free.

LISTEN

Free Thinking: The Greenwich Outrage

tinyurl.com/bbc-free-bour

In February 1894, the French anarchist Martial Bourdin was killed in Greenwich Park when the bomb he was carrying exploded prematurely. In this episode of Radio 4's *Free Thinking* presented by Matthew Sweet, historians Charlotte Jones, Ruth Kinna and Thomas Jones discuss the 'Greenwich Outrage' and its aftermath. Free.

PODCAST

WW2 Pod: We Have Ways Of Making You Talk

Podcast services

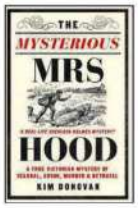
In this biweekly podcast, comedian Al Murray and historian James Holland discuss the Second World War. They've covered a wide range of topics, from the different military campaigns to the experiences of ordinary soldiers, and most recently presented a series of episodes on the 80th anniversary of D-Day. Free.

The Mysterious Mrs Hood

A True Victorian Mystery Of Scandal, Arson, Murder & Betrayal

CRIME

Kim Donovan
Seven Dials, 274 pages, £9.99



When writing a family history, we long for a character whose life was out of the ordinary. In murder victim Mary Jane Bennett, also known as 'Mrs Hood', Kim Donovan, Mary's great great niece, has the ideal candidate. Her body was found on a Norfolk beach in 1900, and the events surrounding the young mother's death were sensationalised in the press. This is the author's attempt to uncover the truth behind the headlines.

Although this is a factual account, you can read it like a novel. To liken this book to a novel, however, does the author a disservice. The events have been carefully researched, as evidenced by the endnotes. Donovan has used the tragedy as a vehicle for delving into various aspects of social history. Readers are treated to explanations of early 20th-century policing and court procedure, as well as a carefully drawn portrait of life in the featured locations.

The book is enhanced with photographs, family trees and a map. Donovan also satisfies a genealogist's curiosity by summarising what happened to the individuals involved after the tragedy took place.

Mary Jane and her husband Herbert

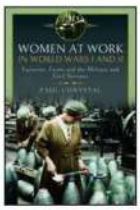
Janet Few runs an online course on writing your family history for Pharos Tutors (pharostutors.com)

Reader Review YOUR CHANCE TO ASSESS THE LATEST BOOKS

Women At Work In World Wars I And II

WW1 & WW2

Paul Chrystal
Pen & Sword, 224 pages, £25



In the 30 or so years that this book covers we discover what life was like for women when they were called upon to replace their men who were marching to war in 1914 and 1939.

They faced ingrained stereotypes about their ability to do tasks that were considered unsuitable for women. The prejudice was so strong that replacement female teachers during the First World War "could not be granted leave to give birth on account of the fact men would never ask for leave for such a thing".

The book takes us through the tasks faced by women during both world wars, and how they surpassed the barriers placed in their path. There are useful explanations of common acronyms that help the reader understand the difference between a FANY, a VAD and a QMAAC. The women of today, while still searching for the equality they deserve, have these women who stepped up in their country's time of need to thank for leading the way for them.

Voluntary Aid Detachment members perform first aid

David Swidenbank, Porthcawl
David is an author and local historian who has been researching his tree for over 40 years

Join Us... Send us an email if you'd like to join our reviewing panel e *wdytyaeditorial@ourmedia.co.uk*

PUBLIC DOMAIN

TV & RADIO

Jonathan Wright previews upcoming programmes on history and family history

Long Lost Family: Born Without Trace

ITVX
Streaming now

The programme's co-presenter Davina McCall *(left)* with foundling Rachel McArthur, whose birth mother Christine *(inset)* left her in a car park at Euston Station

For those who don't want to immerse themselves in sport when they sit down to watch the TV, this summer is difficult to navigate. Between the Euros, Wimbledon and the Olympics, there seems little time for any other programming.

Which gives us the perfect opportunity to catch up on shows that are available to stream. Top of our list is *Long Lost Family: Born Without Trace*, presented by Davina McCall and Nicky Campbell, and made by Wall to Wall Media, the production company behind *Who Do You Think You Are?*. We previewed the first episode of series six, which revealed a DNA connection between two foundlings, a couple of issues back, but the other episodes are just as remarkable.

Episode two focuses in part on Rachel McArthur, known 55 years ago as the "Euston Baby" after she was discovered in a long-stay car park; her adoptive mother told her, "Like Paddington Bear, you were found at a train station." Why did her birth mother leave her? Happily, the team locates relatives who can help fill in the gaps. The show also tells the story of Stephen, a foundling who, taken into care from an unlicensed foster home, only shows up in records from the age of nine months.

Episode three, meanwhile, investigates the birth of Liz, a professor of nursing who remains haunted by being abandoned in a hedge, even once writing an open letter to her biological mother via the newspaper *The Guardian*. Also in the show the mystery of Susanne, who was left in a phone box in East London, has taken six years of research to reach a partial resolution.

In all these cases, there may yet be more revelations ahead, as a new episode of *Long Lost Family: Born Without Trace – What Happened Next?* reminds us when it revisits two particularly fascinating searches featured in previous shows.

Suranne Jones: Investigating Witch Trials

Channel 4
Streaming now

The trials of the Pendle 'witches' in 1612 resulted in 10 executions. What might these cases, for all that two men were among those hanged, tell us about attitudes towards women at the time? This is one of the questions posed by actor Suranne Jones in a two-part series exploring some of the most notorious witch trials in history.

In the second episode, the focus switches to the USA and, more especially, to Salem. How and why did a kind of hysteria grip the town in 1692 and 1693?

Jones also considers what it means when a powerful man such as Donald Trump uses the term 'witch hunt' to portray himself as a victim. A series that has much to say about how our foremothers lived.

Three Million

BBC Sounds
Streaming now

In 1943 at least three million people in India – British subjects – died in the Bengal famine. No memorial exists and, as Rosemary Collins noted when making *Three Million* one of our digital picks in May, it's a tragedy that until recently has hardly been acknowledged in the UK.

This lack of recognition is beginning to change. A familiar pattern of witnesses opening up late in life to share memories of traumatic events is occurring. Another factor here is the close connection between Britain and the subcontinent. Many British Asians lived through these events, or have close relatives who did, and Britons were stationed in India during the Second World War. Then there has been the work of broadcaster and *Three Million* host Kavita Puri in drawing together eyewitness testimony.

Three Million is shaping up to be an ongoing project. June brought a new episode, *Silk Scarves*, which begins with Puri meeting Susannah Herbert, a granddaughter of John Herbert, the governor of Bengal, at a dinner party. Susannah feels shame over her ancestor's involvement, but looking through her family archive, for all it yields terrible revelations, ultimately brings a new perspective – as does a meeting with historian Janam Mukherjee, whose father was a child in Kolkata at the time.

Expect more personal stories to be gathered by Puri in the future, including new testimony from those still living in India.

Who Do You Think You Are?

BBC iPlayer
Streaming now

As we all wait impatiently for the new series of *Who Do You Think You Are?* to begin (see page 10), here's a quick reminder that episodes from series 14 through to 20 are still available to stream on BBC iPlayer. The episodes feature such star names as actor Kate Winslet, presenter turned author Richard Osman, pop legends Lulu and Boy George, DJ Dev Griffin, footballer Alex Scott, comedian Paul Merton and composer Andrew Lloyd Webber.

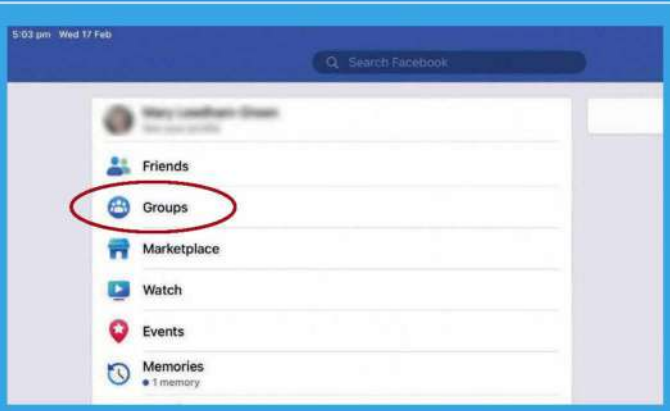
It's particularly fascinating to compare the more recent shows with earlier episodes from the noughties. While old-fashioned work in the archives remains hugely important, it's clear how, for example, the digitisation of records has opened up the past for the show's brilliant genealogists – and, by extension, for anyone who is researching their family history.

ITV/WALL TO WALL MEDIA

WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?

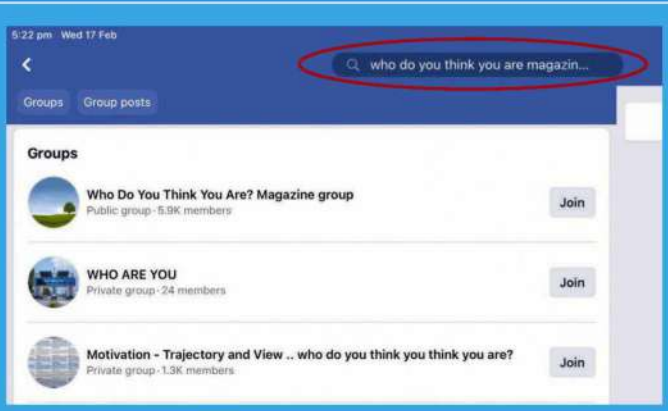
Join Our FACEBOOK GROUP

Did you know that we have a friendly Facebook Group where family historians can share new discoveries, ask for help or just chat about genealogy? If you haven't joined a Facebook Group before, don't worry, it's very simple!



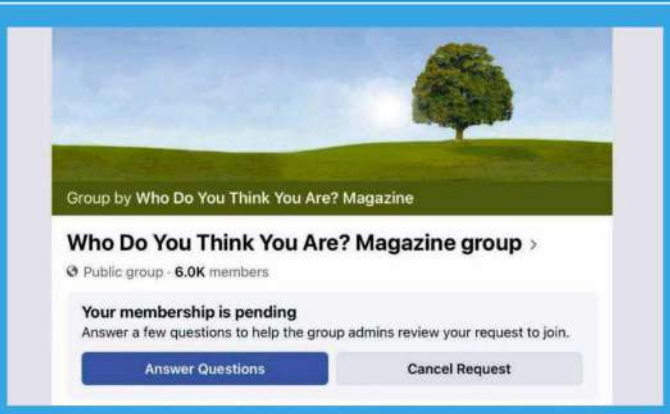
1 Click On The 'Groups' Icon

From the Facebook homepage, click on the 'Groups' icon (this may be at the bottom of the screen on the mobile app or from the menu, or above your News Feed).



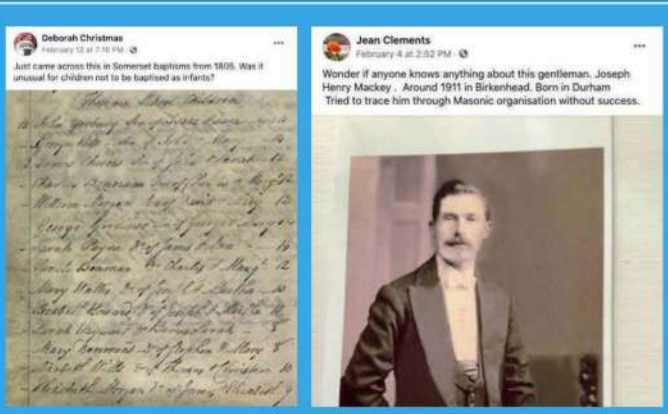
2 Search For Our Group

Search for the *Who Do You Think You Are? Magazine* Group (click the magnifying glass), then click 'Join' next to the name. You will need to read and agree to our rules.



3 Wait To Be Added

We are then notified, and will add you as a member as soon as possible. The group is growing rapidly, but you shouldn't have to wait too long before you're approved.



4 Start Posting!

You can either upload your own query or respond to other people's posts. It's a great way to share your love of family history and get help with your brick walls.

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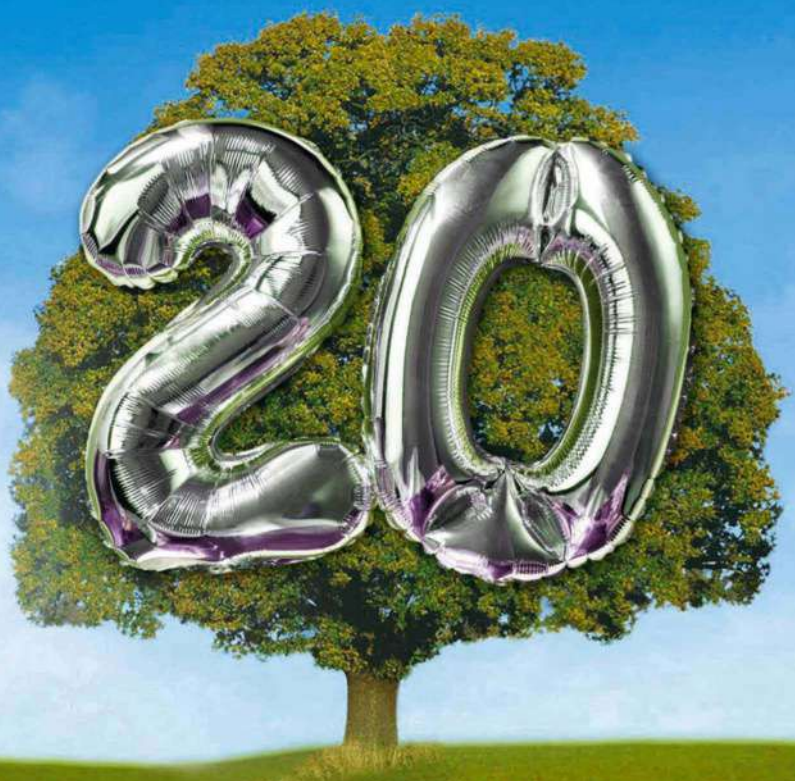

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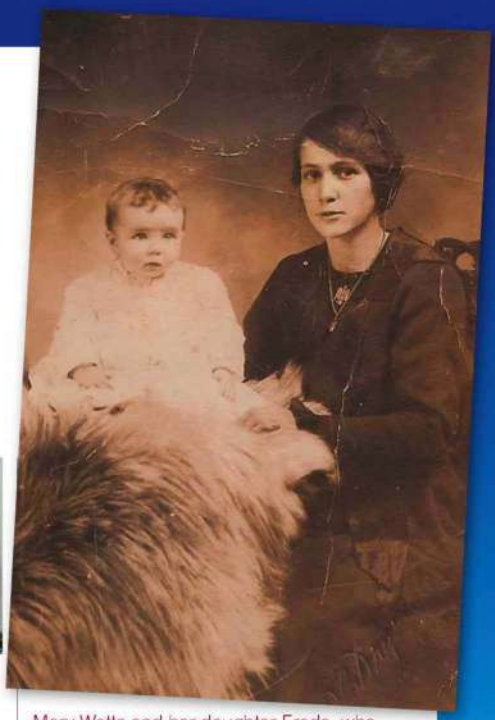
'Mary's Loving Tributes Made Me Cry'

CELEBRATING YOUR DISCOVERIES

Beth Freeman tells **Gail Dixon** about the heartfelt notices her indomitable great grandmother published in a newspaper



Mary Watts and her daughter Freda, who was never able to meet her father Maurice

On 26 October 1918, a local newspaper published a loving message from a heartbroken young woman to her late husband. It would be the first of several tributes to her first love.

More than a century later, her great granddaughter Beth Freeman discovered these 'love letters' while searching online. Time collapsed in a moment when the two generations connected.

"I loved history at school and began researching our family tree as a teenager," Beth explains. "Even after years of looking we can still find amazing gems of information out there."

Beth made her discovery this year after researching her great grandfather Maurice Watts, a market gardener who was born in Moggerhanger, Bedfordshire, in 1894. He married Mary Lincoln of nearby Biggleswade in March 1917.

During the First World War, Maurice served in the 1st Bedfordshire Yeomanry and later the Royal Warwickshire Regiment. Tragically, he was killed in action on the Western Front on 26 October 1917, and is among the nearly 35,000 servicemen from the UK and New Zealand who are listed on the Tyne Cot Memorial to the Missing in Zonnebeke, Belgium, and whose graves are unknown.

"Mary was pregnant with my grandmother Freda at the time of Maurice's death. Not knowing her father would leave a profound gap in Freda's life."

Mary's heartache was compounded in 1918 when she learnt, after weeks of anxiety, that her brother William was a prisoner of war in Germany. He died in April of that year as a result of heart failure.

A few months later Mary also lost her mother Elizabeth, who passed away due to complications caused by Spanish flu.

"My poor great grandmother lost her husband, mother and brother in just over a year. I was struck by the amount of tragedy that Mary had to endure, and her resilience in not giving up."

Perhaps to channel her feelings, Mary began placing heartfelt messages in the *Biggleswade Chronicle* on the anniversary of Maurice's death. Six notices appeared between 1918 and 1926, which Beth found in the newspaper archive at Findmypast (**findmypast.co.uk**).

"Mary's words moved me to tears," Beth reveals. "In one, she wrote, 'Dear husband, I miss you as the days go by. No flowers can I place on the grave where you lie; for the still dark waters keep us apart, but your ever dear face still lives in my heart. From his loving wife and child.'

"Mary was obviously a woman of deep emotion, which sings out in her writing. It struck me that my brother Ross and I have a very similar writing style to her.

"It meant a lot to know that Mary never forgot Maurice. I wish I could have shared the clippings with Freda."

Mary was left alone with a child to raise in postwar Britain. She worked in service and lived in Biggleswade with Freda and her own brother Fred, who had lost an arm during the war.

In 1928 Mary married Alfred Cole, and she went on to have three more children.

"Freda worked in service too before marrying the love of her life George Stanton in 1937. They raised their family on a farm at Langford, Bedfordshire.

"My dad Dave said that Freda and Mary were hard-working women, always busy around the house with chores. Freda loved keeping canaries, tending her flower garden and knitting teddy bears for her grandchildren.

"Sadly my grandmother died when I was four, but I remember her as a quiet lady with a lovely gentle air. My brother recalls her cheeky sense of humour and twinkling eyes. Freda used to wear mismatched colours and patterns, which I do too. I suppose it must be in my genes.

"It means so much to have discovered the loving messages in the newspapers. They painted the picture I had built of Mary into full-blown colour."

BETH FREEMAN is an administrator and lives in Snettisham, Norfolk. She has been researching her family tree for 16 years

My great grandmother lost her husband, mother and brother in just over a year

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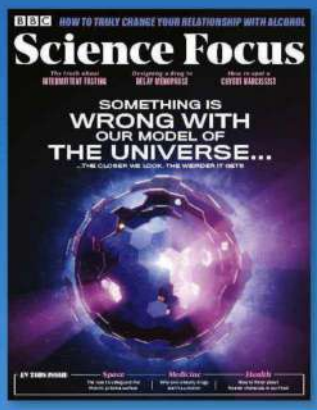

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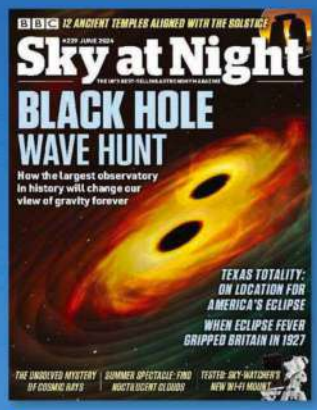

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